A TRANSLATION OF DANTE'S PURGATORIO BY DAVID JOHNSTON

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A TRANSLATION

OF

DANTE'S PURGATORIO.

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DANTE.

FROM THE FRESCO BY GIOTTO.
IN THE BARGELLO AT FLORENCE. DISCOVERED IN 1841.

Credette Cimabuë nella pintura
Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido.

PURGATORIO. C. XI.

Giotto ebbe uno ingegno di tanta eccellenzia, che niuna cosa dalla natura, madre di tutte le cose, e operatrice col continuo girare de' cieli, fu, che egli collo stile, e con la penna, e col pennello non dipignesse.

BOCCACCIO.

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A

TRANSLATION

OF

DANTE'S PURGATORIO,

BY

DAVID JOHNSTON.

O voi ch'avete gl' intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde
Sotto 'l velame degli versi strani.
INFERNO, Canto ix.

BATH:
PRINTED AT THE "CHRONICLE" OFFICE, KINGSTON BUILDINGS.

MDCCCLXVII.

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To my very kind friend, the Rev. JAMES FORD, I inscribe this Translation of the "Purgatorio," in small token of the respect in which I hold his character, and of the value I place upon his friendship.

DAVID JOHNSTON.

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Coleridge, in some remarks on the "Antony and Cleopatra" of Shakespeare, makes use of the term "angelic strength." The epithet is ndeed justly applied to the great Englishman—it is not less just in its application to the great Florentine. This angelic strength in Dante does not merely consist in his wealth of words, his power of colouring, his depth of thought; it is most remarkable in his simplicity. As there are rivers in nature which rush at once from beneath the solid rock, and flow to their termination in one clear, deep, unbroken stream, not lingering and becoming shallow amidst flower and meadow, nor being chafed and broken amidst rocks and other physical hindrances, so it is with Dante. From the first opening line of the Inferno to the closing line of the Paradiso, he flows on deep in matter, calm in his strength, never lingering too long over the sweetest description, nor losing his calmness among the sternest descriptions of suffering or woe.

Except in those passages where the politician, the philosopher, and it may be the theologian, must speak more at large, this steady current of Dante's narrative is never delayed nor disturbed. The reader is ever coming

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to lines or triplets in which beauty of description and depth of meaning force him to pause in wonder and thought. The poet, however, does not labour to produce this effect; he simply tells his tale, and it is only the strange impression of intense reality which his words leave upon the mind that makes his simplicity appear at times something other than simplicity.

The explanation of this is not difficult. We are reading the very mind of Dante. His poem is himself. We trace in it the stern and passionate politician always ready to turn, by the evidence of a few words or a single line, into the gentle and loving man.

We see the bitter and uncompromising foe of the corrupt practices of the Papal Power, and of the vices of the Clergy, giving everywhere proof of his own Catholic and Christian faith.

Very wonderful, considering the time, was the extent of his knowledge. His words sound like prophecy; he seems even to foresee some of the great discoveries of later ages. But he never speaks otherwise than humbly of himself; he does not speak as if he knew more than others, but simply as one whose own knowledge teaches him how little he really does know.

Therefore it is that his poem impresses the mind with such a sense of reality. No thinking man can rise from the perusal of the "Divina Commedia" without feeling

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that from it alone he thoroughly understands the character of Dante. The moralist may find flaws as the critic can find faults, but with every short-coming, moral or literary, no one can rise from a close study of the "Divina Commedia" without a clear and unmistakable impression of the lofty nobility of the man, and the corresponding grandeur of his great work.

My own deep admiration of Dante having made me desirous of drawing towards the "Divina Commedia" the attention of friends who have perhaps not studied it otherwise than as a task in their earlier years, I have ventured to turn them again to its study as a pleasure by the obligations of friendship. I thank my friends most warmly for the kind reception they have been pleased to give to my Translation of the "Inferno;" I now beg their acceptance of the "Purgatorio."

I trust that in passing judgment upon it, they will acquit me of ever forgetting my master in myself or my own fancies; and if I shall have in any degree succeeded in awakening in the minds of some of them a renewed interest in Dante and his great work, I shall indeed feel more than satisfied.

13, Marlborough Buildings, Bath,
Dec., 1867.

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ARGUMENT.

The Mountain of Purgatory is described by Dante as being of a conical form, truncated at its summit. It is placed as an island in the waters of the southern hemisphere. The mountain is very lofty, and divided into two portions, respectively named Ante-Purgatory and Purgatory, and these are cut or indented by circular terraces, which become less in their circumference as the ascent is made. In the former there are four, in the latter seven of such ledges.

In Ante-Purgatory are detained or delayed for certain periods, and before being permitted to commence their real purification, the souls of those who have been guilty when on earth of different forms of indolence, and called the *Negligenti*.

In Purgatory itself each of the seven terraces is destined for the remedial penance of one of the seven capital sins. The souls thus purified are the *Superbi*, *Invidiosi*, *Iracundi*, *Accidiosi*, *Avari*, *Golosi*, and *Lussuriosi*.

On the summit of the Mount of Purgatory is placed the Terrestrial Paradise, ever verdant and always beautiful.

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CANTO I.

Dante describes the glories of the heavens in the new hemisphere where he and Virgil now are. They encounter Cato, of Utica. Virgil and Cato converse together, and the latter points out what is to be done before Dante is conducted towards the Mountain of Purgatory.

To cross a calmer ocean now the bark
Which bears my genius hoists a fuller sail,
And leaves behind it a more cruel sea.
My song shall now be of that second realm
Where of its sins the soul of man is purged,
And is made worthy of ascent to heaven.
Let my dead poesy awake to life,
Oh, sacred Nine! since I am yours,—and thou,
Calliope, take somewhat loftier flight,
Giving my song the concord of that voice
Of which the woful jays of Thessaly
So felt the power, of pardon they despaired.
The eastern sapphire's sweet and tender hue,
Deep'ning and deep'ning in the hushed serene
Of the pure air to the first circling heaven,

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Brought to mine eyes renewal of delight
Soon as I ceased to breathe the deadly air
Which had so saddened me in eye and heart.
That beauteous planet which excites to love
Made the wide orient ripple o'er with smiles,
Veiling the Fishes floating in her train.
Towards the right I turned, and closely scanned
The southern pole, and there four stars I saw,
Unseen by any save the primal pair.
In their fair light the heavens all joyous seemed!
Ah, widowed land, thou region of the North,
Thou hast no power to see those wondrous things!
As from beholding them I turned my gaze,
And round inclined towards the other pole,
Where lost to view the Wain no longer rolled,
Near me I saw a lone and ancient man,
So great the reverence which his aspect claimed,
No son a greater to his father owed.
Long was his beard and it was mixed with grey,
As was the hair upon his aged head,
And right and left over his breast it fell.
The lustrous rays of the four holy stars
So glorified his countenance with light,
The full sun seemed upon his face to play.
" Who come against the gloomy river's course,
" Fleeing the prison of eternal woe?"
He said, and speaking moved his reverend beard :

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" Who was your leader, what your guiding lamp
" As ye came forth from the dark night and dread,
" Which shrouds in blackness the great vale of hell?
" Are then the laws so broken of the abyss?
" Or is new counsel in the highest heaven,
" That from the damned ye to my caverns come?"
On hearing this my leader held me there,
And warning me with words, and hands, and signs,
He made me reverence do with knee and eye,
Then answer gave—" My own will brings me not;
" From heaven a lady came, and for her prayers
" I brought to this man a companion's aid.
" But if it be thy wish that I explain
" More of our state, and more its truth unfold,
" I have no power thy wishes to deny.
" He hath not seen the last dark hour of eve,
" But in his folly came to it so near,
" Short time indeed remained to turn away.
" So as I said,—my mandate was to him,
" To bring him safety, and no other way
" Availeth aught but that in which I move.
" Him have I shewn the world of wicked souls,
" And now my purpose is those souls to shew
" Who, under thee, are being purged from sin.
" How we came hither it were long to tell.
" From heaven the power descends which gives me aid
" To bring him here, thyself to see and hear.

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" Oh, let it please thee ! be thy welcome kind ;
" He goeth forth dear liberty to seek,
" And he who prizes this his life disdains.
" Thou knowest it took all bitterness from death
" At Utica, when thou didst cast aside
" That robe on the great day to shine so bright.
" No laws eternal are for us destroyed,
" For he still lives, and Minos binds not me ;
" I of that circle am where the chaste eyes
" Of thy lov'd Martia wear that look which pray'd
" That she might still be thine, oh, noble heart !
" For her dear sake then condescend to us.
" Through thy seven circles give us leave to pass ;
" The thanks I owe thee I shall bear to her,
" If thou disdain'st not to be named below."
" So great the pleasure Martia gave mine eyes,
" Whilst in the former life," he answer made,
" Whate'er she wished of me I gladly did.
" But since she dwelt beyond the stream accursed
" She hath no power to move me by the law
" Made at the time I issued forth from thence.
" But if directed by a saint from heaven,
" As thou hast said, there need no flattering words ;
" It is enough thou askest in her name.
" Go, then, and see that this man be engirt
" With a smooth rush, and that his face be cleansed,
" So that all blemish be from it removed ;

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" For 'tis not fitting that the eye be touched
" With any dimness in the presence high
" Of the first angel guard of paradise.
" Around this islet at its lowest edge,
" Lo, there beneath, where breaks the encircling wave,
" The yielding mud is thick with rushes crowned.
" No other flower with frond or leafy growth
" Or hardened fibre there can life sustain,
" For none bend safely to the watery shock.
" Hither you may not afterward return ;
" The sun which riseth now will be your guide
" To climb the mount where gentler is the slope."
He spake and vanished, and I upright rose,
Uttering no word, and drew with heart and soul
Close to my guide, and fixed on him my gaze.
Then he began—" Son, follow thou my steps ;
" Backward we turn, for with a slow incline
" The plain sinks down to its extremest bounds."
And now Aurora chased the earlier dawn,
Which fled before her, so that distant far
I recognised the trembling of the sea.
We passed along the solitary plain,
Like one who seeks a pathway he has missed,
And thinks each footstep lost till it be found.
When we had reached a spot where yet the dew
The sun resisted, and being on the part
Where shadow fell, had not yet passed away,

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Gently my master placed his either hand
Wide spread upon the soft and tender herb;
Wherefore, at once perceiving what he meant,
I turned to him, my cheeks bedewed with tears;
Then once again my colour he restored,
Which had been banished by the mists of hell.
And then we came to an unpeopled shore,
Upon whose waters no man ever sailed,
And found again that land from whence he came.
Then did he gird me as the sage enjoined;
And, oh, most wonderful! the humble plant!
As one he chose, another sprang to life,
Ev'n on the instant, whence it had been plucked.

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CANTO II.

The two Poets consider their Journey. A Bark approaches the shore, guided by an angel, and containing souls on their way to Purgatory. Dante recognises a great musician and a former friend, Casello by name. While all listen to Casello's sweet song, Cato suddenly appears and chides them.

Now had the sun to the horizon reached,
Whose arc meridian forms the covering vault
Which at its greatest height Jerusalem copes;
And night, which in opposing circuit rolls,
Now from the Ganges rising holds the Scales,
To let them drop when in excess of day;
So that the white and rosy tinted cheeks
Of beautiful Aurora, where I stood,
By gathering age the hue of orange took.
We still were loitering by the ocean's verge,
Like men who weighed their journey in their thoughts,
The mind in action but the body still;
When, lo! as at the early break of day
Through the thick fog Mars shews his ruddy disk
In the far west, above the watery waste

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I saw—ah, could I see it once again !—
A light which streamed so swiftly o'er the sea
No flying pinion might its speed surpass,
And which, in the short moment I withdrew
My gaze to ask my master what it meant,
More bright in hue and larger had become.
From either side of it there seemed to flow
I know not what of white, whence, by degrees
And underneath, more glittering radiance came.
Still gave my master neither sign nor word,
Till into wings the first-seen whiteness grew ;
Then well he knew who piloted the ship,
And cried—" Incline, in reverence bend thy knee ;
" God's angel, lo, thou seest ! fold thy hands ;
" Now His true minister thou shalt behold ;
" See how he scorns all ways and means of man !
" So that he seeks no oar, and needs no sail,
" Save his own wings, between such distant shores.
" See how he holds them pointed towards the heaven,
" Beating the air with his eternal plumes,
" Which know no change as mortal pinions do."
Then as to us he near and nearer came,
The bird divine, more bright his presence shewed,
So that its glory eye could not sustain ;
Mine I cast down ;—he to the strand drew near
In a small bark, so swift and light of bulk
That it scarce sunk into the yielding wave.

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Upon the poop the heavenly pilot stood
With holiness upon his forehead writ;
More than a hundred spirits sat within.
In exitu Israel de Egypto
They chanted all in unison of voice,
With every line which followed of the psalm.
When he had signed them with the holy cross,
They all did cast themselves upon the beach,
And swift as he had come the angel went.
The band remaining seemed as if they were
Strange to the place, and curious looked around,
Like him who strives new things to comprehend.
On every side the sun shot forth the day,
And with his arrows quivering with their light
From the mid heavens had Capricornus chased;
When the new comers, lifting up their eyes
Towards us turning said—"If known to you,
"Shew us the way which leadeth to the mount."
And Virgil answered—"You appear to think
"That we possess full knowledge of this place;
"But we are strangers here even as yourselves.
"Lately we came, scarce sooner than did you,
"But by another way so stern and wild,
"To climb the present is an easy task."
Those spirits who had failed not to perceive
That by my breathing I was still alive,
Became in their great wonder pale as death;

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And as a messenger with olive branch
  Draws forth the multitude to hear the news,
  And, heedless, no one cares on whom he treads,
So on my countenance was fixed the gaze
  Of those rejoicing spirits, one and all,
  Who for a time their blessed quest forgot.
Before the others one I saw advance
  Embrace to proffer, with such loving mien,
  That I was moved to answer his embrace.
Ah, save in seeming, shades of emptiness!
  Three times behind him were my hands entwined,
  And just so oft they to my breast returned.
I think my face the signs of wonder shewed,
  For with a smile the spirit backward drew,
  Whilst I, with wish to follow, still advanced.
Gently he told me to restrain my step,
  And then it was I knew him, and I prayed
  That he would pause awhile, and with me speak.
He answered—"As in life I loved thee well
  "When in the flesh, so now when from it loosed;
  "Therefore I pause;—but thou, why goest thou?"
"Oh, my Casello! to return again
  "Where I now am, my journey do I make.
  "But from what cause wert thou so long delayed?"
"Thus he replied—"No man hath done me wrong,
  "If he who taketh whom and where he wills,
  "Hath many times refused me passage here,

" Because his own will bends to one more just.
" In truth, these three months past he has received
" All who sought entrance having peace with God.
" Therefore was I, who to the shore had turned
" Where salt becomes the Tiber's mingling wave,
" Welcomed by him with courtesy benign
" At the stream's mouth where now his pinion points,
" Since it is ever there are gathered those
" Who to the gloom of Acheron pass not down."
" If the new law," I said, " take not from thee
" The use and memory of thy chants of love,
" So wont to calm all tempests of my will,
" If it now please thee, some glad moments give
" To my sad soul, which, burdened with the flesh
" In coming here, is troubled and cast down."
" *That love which speaks in my intelligence,*"
In accents sweet he then began to sing,
So sweet my heart still flutters at the sound.
My master and myself and the whole band
Of his companions so entrancèd were,
The mind could entertain no other thought.
We crowded round with sense intently fixed
On the sweet notes, when, lo ! the sage revered
Exclaimed—" What meaneth this, ye sluggish souls?
" Ah, full of negligence ! ah, vain delay !
" Flee to the mountain ; cast away the scales
" Which from your vision hide the face of God."

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As when intent on picking corn and tares,
  Pigeons in gathering flocks the pastures crowd,
  Silent and shewing not their wonted strut,
Should anything approach which bringeth fear,
  Quickly and instantly the food is left,
  For they are troubled with a greater care.
So this new company I now beheld
  Forsake the song, and turn towards the slope
  Like him who goes uncertain of his way:
And we departure not less rapid took.

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CANTO III.

The Poets proceed to scale the mountain but are doubtful and uncertain of the way. A troop of Spirits approach and direct them how to proceed. Dante recognises Manfred, King of Naples and Sicily.

Although in headlong rout this sudden flight
  Across the plain the startled band dispersed,
  Towards the mount where reason spurs us on,
I to my true companion closely kept;
  Wherefore, unless with him should I have run?
  Who up the mountain then had been my guide?
He seemed to me touched by some inner shame.
  Ah, conscience, noble in thy purity,
  How small a fault to thee is sore remorse!
And when his feet recovered from the haste,
  Which steals its dignity from every act,
  My mind which at the first had been constrained,
Enlarged its scope with a more active thought,
  And straight I held my face towards the mount
  Which highest from the waters heavenward spreads.

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The sun which flamed behind me glowing red,
Broken before me fell, and with the shape,
Which had in me his intercepted rays.
I turned my steps aside somewhat in fear
Lest I might be abandoned, when I saw
That before me alone the ground was dark.
And then my comforter began to speak,
Towards me turning—" Wherefore this distrust?
" Am I not with thee—am I not thy guide?
" Now evening gathers where in burial lies
" That body which in life my shadow threw;
" Naples retains what Brindisi has lost.
" If then in front of me no shadow shows,
" Marvel not more than that throughout the heavens,
" One ray no hindrance to another gives.
" To suffer torments both of heat and cold
" Bodies like mine Omnipotence adapts,
" But how it is He wills not to reveal.
" Foolish are those who think our finite mind
" Can sound the everlasting ways of Him
" Who the three persons in one substance holds.
" Be ye content, 'tis so—ye race of men!
" For had the power been given all things to see,
" Mary had needed not to bear her Son;
" Nor had ye seen great men with vain desire;
" For their desires had then been satisfied,
" Now given to them for their eternal woe;

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" Of Plato and the Stagyrite I speak,
" And many others ;"—then he bent his head,
Speaking no more, and troubled he remained.
Meanwhile our steps had reached the mountain's foot ;
There so precipitous we found the cliff,
Even with a ready limb the ascent were vain.
Twixt Turbia and Lerici whatever path
Most desert and most lonely, still to this
Would be a stair of plain and smooth ascent.
" Who knows on which hand so inclines the slope,"
My master said, and checked his onward step,
" That he may here ascend who has no wings ?"
And whilst with head cast downward, he in mind
Examined all the bearings of the road,
And up and round towards the rock I looked,
On the left hand a multitude of souls
Appeared to me, and tow'rds us moved their feet,
Yet scarcely seemed to move, so slow they came.
" Lift up thine eyes, my master, for behold,
" Those now are coming who will counsel give,
" If thou thyself in thine own thought have none."
He looked at me and cheerfully replied ;
" Let us approach them, for they move so slow ;
" Be thou no more depressed in hope, sweet son."
There was such distance still 'twixt them and us,
Though we had made perhaps a thousand steps,
As a good thrower might project a stone,

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When all pressed close towards the rigid mass
  Of the high cliff, and firm and serried stood,
  Like one who doubting pauses to look round.
" Ye holy dead, ye spirits of the elect,"
  So Virgil spake ;—" Say by that peace divine
  " Which in my heart's belief awaits you all,
" Where may this mountain sink so gently down,
  " That it be possible to make the ascent ;
  " Who knoweth most feels most the loss of time."
As when the woolly flock forsake their fold,
  First one or two or three, the others stand,
  Poor timid things, with eye and mouth to ground,
And what the first one doth, the others do,
  All closely crowding round it, if it stop,
  Simple and satisfied, they know not why ;
So saw I tow'rds us come the foremost files
  Of that most blessed company of souls,
  Modest in face, and in their bearing high.
When they perceived the interrupted light,
  Which lay upon the ground on my right side,
  The shadows pointing from me to the cliff,
They stopped and drew themselves a little back,
  And all the rest who followed in the train,
  Not knowing why or wherefore, did the same.
" I wait not your request, but I confess
  " This is a human body which you see,
  " By whom the sun is severed on the earth.

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" Lose not yourselves in wonder, but believe
" That not without the strength which comes from heaven.
" He seeks those stony boundaries to surmount."
So spake the master, and the hallowed troop
Said " Turn, and in our company proceed,"
All beckoning with the hand in friendly sign.
And one of them began :—" Whoe'er thou art
" Whilst going, turn to me thy face and say
" If thou hast ever seen me in the world."
I turned towards him and I scanned him well ;
Beautiful he was and blond, and sweet in look ;
But of his eyebrows one was cloven through.
When I with all humility denied
That I had ever seen him,—" Look," he said ;
And on his breast high up a wound he shewed.
" I am Manfredi," speaking with a smile,
" Grandson of Constance, Empress of Almaine ;
" Therefore I pray thee when again on earth,
" Go to my daughter, fair and glorious fount
" Of Arragon's and Sicily's renown,
" Tell her the truth whatever others say.
" After my body by two mortal strokes
" To death was wounded, weeping I resigned
" Myself to Him who loveth to forgive.
" My crimes were many and of fearful fame ;
" But goodness infinite so wide can reach,
" All it embraceth who return to it.

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" If he, Cosenza's pastor, who was trained
" By Clement's hate to hunt me unto death,
" Had rightly read this truth in God's own page,
" My bones would still be lying where they lay,
" At the bridge head near Benevento's towers,
" Under protection of the stony pile.
" Now the rain beats them and the wind disturbs,
" Far from my kingdom by the Verda's waves
" Where he transferred them, funeral tapers quenched.
" By their anathema is not so lost
" The eternal love that it may not revive,
" Whilst life permits one lingering flower of hope.
" True that whoever in the anger dies
" Of Holy Church, though he repent at last,
" Is under ban to stand these bounds without,
" For every act presumptuous, thirty times
" The time then lost, unless the high decree
" Be shortened by the prayers of holy men.
" See then if thou canst make my spirit glad,
" Revealing to my Constance, dear and good,
" How thou hast seen me—also this my ban;
" Prayers said above avail no little here."

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CANTO IV.

The Poets directed by the Spirits enter a narrow and difficult defile. Virgil explains to Dante why the course of the Sun is reversed. Many Spirits are seen standing in the shadow of a rock. These have been guilty on earth of the sins of sloth and negligence. Dante recognises Belacqua.

When by delight or, it may be, by grief,
Any one faculty of ours is held,
The soul so centres in it every thought,
That it can recognise no power besides;
And thus disproves that error which believes
That more than one soul gives the body light.
Therefore when anything is heard or seen,
Which closely to itself attracts the soul,
Time passes and the man perceives it not;
One faculty is that by which we hear,
Another that which wholly grasps the soul;
This is in measure bound—the other free.
And of all this I had experience true,
Wondering and listening to the spirit's words,
For through degrees full fifty had the sun

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Climbed upwards, unperceived by me, since when
We came unto the spot, where with one voice
Those spirits cried :—" Lo here is what you seek !"
Oft has the villager a larger gap
Closed with a single fork-load of his thorns,
What time the grape is purpling on the vine,
Than was that entrance whence we made the ascent,
We two—my leader first, I following close
Soon as the ghostly troop departure took.
San Leo to climb, at Noli to descend,
To scale Bismantua to its crowning peak
Man must have feet ; but here he needs to fly
With, the fleet wing, I say, and pinions swift
Of keen desire, behind such guidance true
As his who gave me hope and cleared my way.
We climbed the hollowed pathway of the rock ;
On either side the borders hemmed us in,
Both feet and hands clung to the soil below.
Having at length attained the edge extreme
Of the high cliff, now to the landscape clear,
" My master," I exclaimed, " how shall we go ?"
He answered me—" Take thou no backward step,
" But follow me, and upwards gain the ground,
" Until some one we meet who knows it well."
The eye was lost in such unmeasured height,
And the steep slope surpassed the middle line
Which cuts the quadrant at its outer curve.

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Weary I was when I commenced to climb:
" Turn, oh, my father, unto me; behold,
" Unless thou pausest, I remain alone."
" My son," he said, " try thou to reach so far"—
One finger pointing to a rocky ledge
Which on that side terraced the mountain round.
His word so spurred me, that with effort great
I followed him, creeping on hands and feet,
Till I at last the encircling terrace trod;
And seated here we turned ourselves about
Towards the east, towards the way we climbed.
A joyous sight to many this had been!
First to the lower shore mine eyes I cast,
Then to the sun I raised them, wondering much
Wherefore his rays should strike us on the left.
The poet soon perceived that I was sunk
In stupor at the chariot of the sun,
Rolling its wheels betwixt us and the north.
And so he said—" Were the Twin Brother stars
" Now in the train of that effulgent orb,
" Which risen or set is still the guiding light,
" Thou shouldst perceive the Zodiac glowing red,
" Rotate, yet closer to the circling Bears,
" If not diverted from the ancient course.
" How this may be if thou hast wish to learn,
" Condense thy thoughts; imagine Sion's mount
" So with this mountain placed upon the earth

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" That one alone horizon is for both
" And different hemispheres ; then must the path
" Where Phaeton's chariot knew no guiding hand,
" As thou wilt see, on one hand lead to this,
" Whilst on the other to that mount it goes,
" If thine intelligence observeth right."
" 'Tis certain, oh, my master ! " then I said,
" That I at no time saw so clear as now,
" Where my own knowledge seems to fall so short,
" How the mid circle of the primal sphere,
" Equator in the starry science called,
" And which 'twixt sun and winter ever rests,
" For reasons shown by thee, from hence withdraws
" Towards the north, when to the Jews it seems
" Tow'rds the hot regions of the south to move.
" But let it please thee, I have wish to know
" How far we still must go, for higher soars
" The mountain than my straining eyes can reach."
He answered me—" This mountain is so formed
" Those who begin to climb find heavy toil,
" But this grows lighter as they higher rise ;
" Wherefore when unto thee the slope shall seem
" So gentle that 'tis easy to ascend
" As in a ship to follow down the stream,
" Then shalt thou see this pathway terminate,
" And to thy wearied body find repose.
" No more I answer : this I know for truth."

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When he had said these words, and ceased to speak,
From some one near us came this sound—" Perhaps
" You will have need of rest before it come !"
On hearing this each of us wheeled about,
And on the left we saw a mighty rock,
Of which till then neither had taken note.
To this we both drew near, and, lo ! there were
Behind and in the shadow of the stone
Forms standing with the air which sluggards have ;
And one who seemed with weariness oppressed,
Was seated, and his arms entwined his knees,
And between these he held his visage sunk.
" Ah, gentle master mine," I said, " behold
" Him who appears more indolent in look
" Than if his sister had been sloth herself."
On this he turned and some attention paid,
Raising his eyes just up and o'er his thigh,
And said—" Ascend, oh thou who art so brave !"
And then I knew him ; and that anxious pain
Which still my breath made somewhat hard and quick,
Hindered not my approach ; and when at length
Near him I stood, he scarcely raised his head,
Saying—" Hast thou well noted how the sun
" O'er the left shoulder rolls his chariot wheels ?"
His slothful attitude, his words abrupt
Brought to my lips the movement of a smile.
Then I began—" Belacqua, never more

" For thee I grieve ; but say, why seated thus,
" Just at this spot ? dost thou await thy guide,
" Or has old habit mastered thee again ?"
" Brother," he said, " why should I care to climb ?
" He would not let me to my torments pass,
" God's usher who is seated at the gate.
" Around me just so long the heavens must roll,
" Ere I may enter, as they did in life,
" Because good thoughts were to its close delayed ;
" If before this, prayer cannot bring me help,
" Which rises from a heart quickened by grace,
" What other can which heaven disdains to hear ?"
Before me now the poet upwards climbed,
And said—" Let us go forward ; lo ! the sun
" Touches the arc meridian, and the foot
" Of night casts shadow o'er Morocco's shore."

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CANTO V.

The Poets continue their ascent. They encounter a crowd of spirits. These had all come to a violent end, but had repented and made peace with God before their death. Dante recognises Jacopo del Cassero, Buonconte di Montefeltro, and Pia of Sienna.

Already from those spirits I had gone,
And now was treading in my leader's steps,
When from behind me, with his finger raised,
Some one exclaimed—"Lo, how the solar ray
"From the left hand strikes him who is below,
"He seems to bear himself like living man!"
At this remark I turned around, and saw
One gazing at me with a wonder strange,
At me alone, and at the broken light.
"Wherefore so deeply is thy soul absorbed,"
My master said, "that it thy pace retards?
"What matters it to thee this babbling talk?
"Follow thou me; let others speak who may,
"Stand like a solid tower, which bendeth not
"Although its crest be battered by the winds;

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" For that man ever in whom thought on thought
" Follows too quick, findeth his aim recede,
" For thoughts grow weak which one another crowd."
How could I answer him but that " I come?"
And then that colour slightly tinged my cheek
Which sometimes merits pardon for a fault.
Meanwhile across the slope with step oblique,
Not far in front of us, some people came,
Singing the *Miserere*, verse and verse.
When they perceived that I no passage gave
Through my own body to the rays of light,
A hoarse and long-drawn " Oh!" cut short their hymn;
And two of them, acting as messengers,
Ran forth to meet us, and with this request—
" Of your condition we would crave to know?"
My master said—" Your path you may retrace,
" And unto those who sent you make report,
" That this man's body is of very flesh.
" If at his shadow they have stayed their steps,
" As seems to me, this answer is enough:
" 'Give to him honour, he may profit them.'"
No flaming vapours in the early night
Have I seen cleave so swiftly the pure air,
Nor, at the setting sun, the August clouds,
As these now turned and sped their upward course
To join the rest, and then towards us faced
Like a troop running without bit or rein.

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" Lo, many spirits now upon us crowd,
" Coming to make request," the poet said,
" Therefore pass on, and as thou passest list."
" Ah, soul ! who goest to assured joy
" With the same members which thou hadst at birth,"
Crying, they came, " stay thou thy steps awhile.
" Look if thou ever one of us hast seen,
" That in the world of such thou may'st report.
" Why still proceed ? why not thy progress stop ?
" All we were done by violence to death,
" And sinners were to the last hour of life ;
" Then from the grace divine a warning came,
" So contrite and forgiving, forth we passed
" From the old life, and were at peace with God,
" Who gives us sweet desire to see Himself."
" Although I note your persons well," I said,
" No one I recognise ; but if I know
" What may be pleasing to you, gentle souls !
" Speak ye, and I will say it by that peace
" In search of which I pass from world to world,
" Following the steps of so renowned a guide."
Then one began—" We to thy kindness trust
" In fullest, and no oath from thee we need ;
" For want of power make not thy proffer void,
" Therefore I speak alone before the rest,
" And pray thee, should'st thou ever see the land
" Which between Naples and Romagna lies,

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" That of thy kindness thou wilt plead my suit,
" So that at Fano prayer effectual rise,
" To give me power to purge my heavy sins.
" There my first breath was drawn, but the deep wounds
" Whence flowed that body's blood, my spirit's home,
" Were in Antenor's territory made,
" There where I thought my safety most secure.
" The Lord of Esté, holding me in wrath
" Beyond all bounds of justice, willed my doom.
" But towards Mira had my flight been made,
" When overtaken at Oriaco,
" I still had been where it is life to breathe.
" Into the marsh I fled ; the reeds and ooze
" So clogged my course, I fell, and from my veins
" Saw the earth flooded with a crimson pool."
Then spake another—" Ah, may thy desire
" Which brought thee to this mount be satisfied,
" So thy kind pity gives me aid in mine !
" Of Montefeltro I, Buonconté, was ;
" None cared for me, Joanna nor my kin,
" Therefore with drooping head with these I go."
And then I said—" What force was it or chance
" Which dragged thee forth from Campaldino's plain,
" So that thy grave the world hath never known ? "
" Ah ! " answered he, " at Casentino's foot
" A river flows, which, Archiano named,
" In Apennine above the convent springs.

" There where its name becomes an empty sound
" I came, my throat deep trenched with deadly wounds,
" Flying on foot, staining the plain with blood.
" Then my sight failed me, power of speech was gone,
" My latest word was Mary's blessed name,
" And there I fell, companionless my flesh.
" Truth I will speak—tell it to living men!
" God's angel took me, and the fiend of hell
" Shouted—'Oh, sent of heaven, why rob me thus?
" 'Thou carriest with thee the immortal soul,
" 'By means of one small tear forced from my grasp;
" 'I shall deal other with his other part.'
" Thou knowest well how gathers in the air
" That humid vapour which in rain returns,
" Soon as it reaches the condensing cold.
" That evil will, which ever evil seeks,
" With mind conjoined, both wind and vapour stirred,
" By the inherent power his nature gives.
" Hence was the valley clothed, as day declined,
" From Pratomagno to the Apennine,
" With vapours, and so charged the upper heaven
" That unto water changed the pregnant air;
" The rain descended, and the torrents swelled
" With what the earth could not itself absorb;
" And as with mighty rivers raging full,
" Towards the royal stream it rolled its flood
" So swiftly that no barrier was a check.

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" My stark and stiffened body at its mouth
" By fierce Archiano found, was onwards swept
" To Arno, loosening from my breast the cross
" Which in my death-woe of myself I made.
" It rolled me by its banks and o'er its bed,
" Then covering hid me with its gathered spoils."
" Ah! when again thou tread'st the other world,
" And from thy weary journey hast repose,"
Spake the third spirit when the second ceased,
" Me, who am Pia, do not thou forget;
" Born in Sienna, in Maremma slain;
" He knows who was the first to circle me
" At my espousals with the jewelled ring."

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CANTO VI.

Dante still speaks of those who put off repentance till the hour of death. He encounters Sordello, a Mantuan, and fellow-citizen of Virgil. Dante then breaks forth in a noble strain of indignation against the divisions and sins of Italy and Florence.

When from some game of hazard men break up,
The luckless loser lingers full of grief,
His throws repeating, and in sorrow learns;
Whilst with the winner all the rest retire:
One goes before, one holds him from behind,
One calls for notice moving at his side;
He does not stop, but this one, that one hears,
The pressure ceases where his hand is stretched;
Thus from the crowd he gains protection sure.
Such was my case in this thick surging crowd,
For now to this side turning, now to that,
With many promises I brake away.
Here Aretino was, who at the hands
Of savage Ghin-de-Tacco met his doom,
And he who in the chase of war was drowned;

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Here prayed with arms in supplication raised
Frederick Novello, and the Pisan son,
Who proved the strength of good Marzucco's faith.
I saw Count Orso, and that soul I saw
Through spite and envy from its body torn,
As he hath said, for uncommitted sin,
Pier de la Brosse by name; let her take heed
While yet alive, the Lady of Brabant,
So that she herd not with a fouler flock.
When I was free from the whole crowd of souls
Who in their prayers the prayers of others asked,
That they may sooner reach their saintly rest,
I spake—"To me thou seemest to deny,
"Light of my reason! in thine every text
"That prayer has power to alter heaven's decrees;
"Yet with this purpose do those people pray.
"Shall then their hope be altogether vain,
"Or have I scarce thy meaning understood?"
"My book is clear and plain," he answer made,
"And hope in them will not fallacious prove
"If with a spirit wise the thing is viewed.
"Judgment divine bends not His head supreme,
"Because love's fervent fire at once fulfils
"What the sojourner here is bound to pay.
"But there where I have closely put the point
"Prayer could in no wise wash away the sin,
"Because the sinner was disjoined from God.

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" Truly such doubts profound are not for thee
" To dwell upon, unless she please to shed
" On thine intelligence the light of truth.
" Dost thou perceive I speak of Beatrice?
" Lo! there above upon this mountain's top,
" Thine eyes shall rest on her, smiling and glad."
" Kind Chief," I said, " let us make greater speed,
" I am not weary now as late I was,
" And, lo! the bank already casts its shade."
" We will go forward with such light as shines,"
He answered me, " as far as we have power;
" But the fact stands not as thou deem'st it does.
" Before the crest thou reachest thou shalt see
" That orb return now covered by the bank,
" So that thy body breaks its rays no more.
" But see thou where a spirit stands apart,
" Alone and lonely, and towards us looks;
" This will our knowledge quicken of the way."
We came towards it—" Ah, thou Lombard soul,
" How proud and haughty bearest thou thyself,
" How slow and calm the movement of thine eyes!"
No sign it gave, nor to us uttered word,
But let us onward pass, and only looked,
As looks a lion couching in repose.
Yet Virgil nearer drew to it, and prayed
That it would shew to us a gentler slope.
No answer made the shade to his request,

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But of our native country and our lives
Inquired; and my dear Leader then began—
"Mantua"—and, wholly self-enwrapt, the shade
Moved from its standing place, and towards him came,
Saying—"Oh, Mantuan, I Sordello am,
"Thy land was my land," and the two embraced.
Oh, Italy! thou slave, thou home of grief,
Ship without steersman in thy tempest fierce,
No Queen of provinces, but harlot vile!
This noble spirit was thus full of joy,
For the sweet sound alone of his own land,
To give glad greeting to its citizen;
Whilst at this very time in war are plunged
Thy living men, and they each other tear,
Whom but one wall and but one trench confine.
Seek miserable, seek amidst the shores
Of thy sea coast, then in thy bosom look
If any part of thee rejoice in peace.
What doth it profit that Justinian's hand
The bit adjusted, if thy saddle void?
Thou without him hadst owned a lesser shame.
Oh, ye whose duty lies in holy things,
To Cæsar leaving the high seat of rule,
Had you but known God's sacred text to read;
Behold how savage hath this beast become
Because without correction of the spur
After your hands had grasped the guiding rein.

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Albert, the German ! who deserted her,
Now fierce and savage in her license grown,
Thou should'st have ridden her with spur and curb.
May the high judgment of the heavens descend
Upon thy seed with vengeance new and clear,
That thy successor may its terror own ;
For ye have made, thy father and thyself,
Slaves in your own land to the lust of power,
Your empire's garden waste and desert here.
Behold the Montagues and Capulets,
Monaldi, heedless Fillipeschi see,
Those drowned in sorrow, these oppressed with fear.
Come, cruel, come ! see thou the sunken state
Of thy old nobles, and their sufferings heal !
Thou, too, shalt see how safe is Santafior.
Come thou and see thy Rome drowned in her tears,
A widow lonely, calling day and night,
" Why, oh, my Cæsar, why desert me thus ? "
Come, see how love unites thy people's hearts,
And if for us no pity fill thy breast,
Come then the shame for thine own lost renown.
And if permitted me, oh Lord supreme !
Thou who for us didst taste the bitter Cross,
Are Thy just eyes in anger turned away,
Or is there preparation in the depths
Of Thy high counsel, for some blessed good
Hid altogether from our blinded sight ?

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For all the lands of Italy are full
Of tyrants, and each village churl becomes
A new Marcellus, drunk with faction strife.
Oh, Florence mine! well may thou be content
That thou art not by this digression touched,
Thanks to thy people's keen and stirring life;
Many are just in heart, but slow in act,
Lest thoughtless action should the arrow point;
But justice sits upon thy people's lips.
Many refuse the public charge to fill,
Thy people keenly grasp the proffered boon,
And cry, although not called, "Be mine the charge."
Be glad, rejoice that all the means are thine;
Rich in thy wealth, in wisdom, and in peace,
And, if I speak the truth, the fruit not hid.
Athens and Lacedæmon, whence came forth
The ancient laws so full of wise restraint,
Made tow'rds pure living but a little step
Compared with thee, who coinest such a store
Of subtle laws—what in October wove
Into the mid November will not reach.
How oft within the time of memory
Laws, money, office, manners thou hast changed!
How often sought renewal of thy limbs.
And if thy memory hold and light be given,
Like to that sick man thou wilt see thyself
Who finds no ease upon his bed of down,
But ever turning strives to cheat his pain.

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CANTO VII.

Virgil discloses himself to Sordello, who conducts the two Poets to a beautiful valley. There they behold many mighty Princes, who in their great ambition deferred all thoughts of holy things.

After the greetings generous and glad
  Between those spirits more than once renewed,
  Sordel stepped back, and said—"Who may ye be?"—
"Ere yet this mountain was the place assigned
  "For souls deemed worthy of ascent to God,
  "Octavian gave to burial my bones.
"Virgil I am, and for no other sin
  "Than want of faith, I lost the joys of heaven."
  Such were the words my guide in answer spake.
Like one who suddenly before him sees
  Things unexpected, and in wondering doubt
  What to believe, says "Is it—is it not?"
So seemed this spirit, and with downcast eye
  He humbly drew towards him, and he stooped,
  As a dependent might, and clasped his knees.

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" Oh, glory of the Latin race," he said,
" By whom men know the puissance of our tongue,
" Oh boast eternal of my native home !
" What grace or merit gives thee to my sight ?
" If worthy of thy words, tell me I pray
" Com'st thou from hell, and from which circle there ? "
" Through all the circles of the dolorous realm,"
He answered him, " am I now hither come,
" Moved and led onward by the strength divine.
" Not for deeds done, but for not having done
" I lost the light supreme, thy soul's desire,
" And which by me too late was recognised.
" Below there is a place, not sad with pain,
" But with gloom only, where laments are heard,
" Not with the sound of wailing but of sighs.
" There with the infant innocents I dwell,
" Bit by the teeth of death ere they be yet
" Purged from the sin original in man.
" There too I dwell with those not clothed upon
" With the three holy virtues, but who knew,
" And, pure in life, the others made their rule.
" But give some sign, if thou hast will or power,
" To guide us sooner to the very point
" Where its true entrance Purgatory shows."
" At no fixed spot," he said, " are we here placed ;
" Around and upwards I have leave to pass ;
" Thy guide I am as far as I may go.

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" But mark already how the day declines;
" And in the night-time none may dare the ascent.
" 'Tis well we seek a pleasant place of rest.
" Spirits there are some distance on the right;
" If thou be willing I shall thither lead,
" And with much pleasure make thee known to them."
" How may this be," he answered, " should one wish
" To climb by night, would he the hindrance find
" In other's will, or in default of power?"
On earth his finger good Sordello drew:
" Behold," he said, " beyond this single line
" Thou shalt not pass after the sun has set;
" But think not other causes hindrance give
" Than the night's darkness to an upward course;
" With want of power this nullifies the will.
" Below, however, thou mayst turn and go
" Backward and forward on the mountain side
" Whilst the horizon holds the day in check."
And then my master, almost wondering, said,
" Conduct us to the place thou spakest of
" As having power to give our stay delight."
A little onward we had turned from hence
When I perceived the mountain hollowed out,
As in the earth great valleys seam the hills.
" Now," said the spirit, " we will yonder go
" Where the bank makes a fissure in its breast,
" And there the new day's coming shall await."

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A tortuous path between the rock and plain
  Our steps led onward to the valley's brink,
  Where the surrounding edge half disappears.
Gold and fine silver, scarlet and ceruse,
  The wood of India, beautiful and bright,
  Fresh emeralds when the stone is newly broke,
Compared with this fair depth of herb and flower,
  Had been in pride of colour dulled and dimmed,
  As by the greater conquered is the less.
But not in colour only Nature lived,
  But in the sweetness of a thousand breaths
  Of subtle odour, nameless, indistinct.
" *Salve Regina*," on the flowery sward,
  Chanting and seated, souls I heard and saw,
  Not to be seen beyond the valley's bounds.
" Before the sun now feeble sinks to rest,"
  Began the Mantuan who had brought us there,
  " Ask not my guidance for a close approach ;
" From this rock's eminence thine eyes will note
  " With better purpose all their acts and looks
  " Than in the hollow in their company.
" He who exalted sits, and in his air
  " Gives evidence of duty unfulfilled,
  " Whose lips respond not to the others' chant,
" Rudolph the Emperor was, who held the power
  " To heal the wounds of this dead Italy,
  " Too deep for other medicine to cure.

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" The other, in whose look he comfort finds,
" Ruled o'er that region where the waters spring
" Which Moldau rolls to Elbe, the Elbe to sea;
" His name was Ottocar, and yet a youth
" Was better man than Wenceslaus his son,
" The bearded slave of luxury and sloth.
" And that Nasetto, now in counsel close
" With him who bears the aspect so benign,
" Dishonouring the white lilies flying died.
" Observe, take note how he now beats his breast;
" Note, too, that other one who with his cheek
" Upon his palm, sighing, has made a couch;
" Father—wife's father—of the curse of France.
" They know his evil and most vicious life,
" And hence the sorrow by which both are pierced.
" He who looks large of limb, and in accord
" Raises the chant with him, of feature bold,
" Was girt about with merit unsurpassed;
" And after him, had he remained the king
" Who yonder, young in years, behind him sits,
" The stream of virtue had unbroken flowed.
" This of his other heirs none dare to say.
" Frederick and James his realm alone possess,
" But no one owns the better heritage.
" Rarely is human virtue reproduced
" In the stock's branches; so the Giver wills,
" That men may seek the gift from Him in prayer

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" The words I speak not less King Charles affect
" Than Pedro, his companion in the chant ;
" Apulia and Provence the sorrowing proofs
" The plant is so much poorer than the seed,
" As of her husband still Constantia vaunts,
" More than do Beatrice and Margaret theirs.
" Behold the monarch of the simple life,
" Henry of England—there alone he sits ;
" He on his branches bears a better fruit.
" He seated on the ground in lower state
" And gazing upwards is the Marquis Prince,
" Who was the cause that Alexandria's war
" Brought woe to Canavese and Montferrat."

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CANTO VIII.

Two angels descend from heaven to guard the valley. The Poets recognise Nino de' Visconti di Pisa. A serpent moves towards the valley, but disappears at the sound of the angel's wings. Dante makes a noble eulogium on the great family of the Malespini.

It was the hour when fond desire returns
  With wistful longings in the sailors' hearts,
  The day they bade their loving friends adieu,
And which sweet pangs to the young traveller brings,
  Who hears the Ave from the distant bell,
  Which seems to mourn the dying of the day;
When I began to find my hearing void,
  And I beheld one of those spirits rise,
  And with his hands the rest to listen sign.
His palms were joined, and both he lifted high,
  With eyes towards the east which seemed to say,
  "Oh Lord, in Thee alone may peace be found,"
"*Te lucis ante*" with such air devout
  Fell from his lips, and in such dulcet tones,
  I was all lost and carried out of self.

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And then the rest with holy sweetness full
In concord followed through the hymn entire,
Their faces lifted to the heavenly sphere.
Here fix thine eyes, oh, reader, on the truth,
For the veil covering it is now so fine,
It is not difficult within to pass !
I saw that gracious company of souls
In silence deep, pale and with humble mien,
As if in expectation, upward gaze.
And lo ! from out the heavens in downward flight
Two angels came, bearing two flaming swords,
Curtailed in length and of their points deprived.
Green as the tender leaflets at their birth
Their vestments were, which floating streamed behind,
And by the green wings moved, fluttered the air.
Near and above us one his pinion closed ;
To the bank opposite the other flew,
So that the spirits held the middle space.
Their heads' fair beauty I could well discern,
But in their faces' glory vision failed,
As power is conquered by excess of power.
" These came from Mary's bosom, and are both,"
Sordello said, " to guard the valley sent
" Against the serpent speedily to come."
And I, not knowing where its path might be,
Turned me, and closer in my contact drew
With terror chilled to him my home of trust.

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" Let us descend," Sordello also said,
" Among those mighty shades, and speak with them;
" A very gracious welcome will be thine."
It seemed scarce paces three ere I had reached
The valley's bed, and one I saw who gazed
As if myself alone he would have known.
Now was the time when darkness filled the air,
But not so much that twixt his eyes and mine
Might not be seen what until then was hid.
He came towards me, and I went to him:
" Ah, Nino, noble judge! what mighty joy
" To see thee here, and not among the damned!"
No form of mutual greeting we forgot,
And then he asked—" How long since thou art come
" O'er the far waters to this mountain's foot?"
" Ah!" said I, " hither through the realms of woe
" I came this morn, and still the first life live,
" But journeying thus the other hope to gain."
Soon as the words I answering spake were heard,
He and Sordello suddenly drew back,
Like men in wonder and confusion lost.
The one to Virgil, and the other turned
To one there seated, crying, " Conrad, up!
" Come and behold what wills the grace of God."
And then to me—" By the deep gratitude
" Thou owest Him who in His wisdom hides
" His primal cause—a stream that none can ford—

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" When thou shalt be beyond these waters wide,
" Say to Joanna that for me she pray
" There where the innocent an answer find ;
" Her mother's love is now no longer mine,
" Since the white veil of widowhood she changed,
" Which in her misery she would fain resume.
" By her we learn with ease to understand
" How long the flame of love in woman burns,
" If eye and frequent contact rouse it not ;
" A fairer sepulchre she will not have
" From the war-viper of the Milanese
" Than she had had under Gallura's bird."
And thus he spake, and with the stamp impressed
On his whole aspect of that honest zeal
Which in his heart with measured temper burns.
To heaven my greedy eyes now wholly turned
There where the stars most slowly roll their spheres
As nearest to the axle rolls the wheel.
Then spake my guide—" What look'st thou at, my son ? "
I answered him—" At those three glowing lights
" Which make this pole so marvellously shine."
He said to me—" Lo, those four lustrous stars
" By thee this morning seen are now below,
" And these have risen where the others were."
Whilst yet he spake Sordello drew him close,
Saying—" Behold, our enemy is there ! "
With finger making his attention sure.

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At the just point where barrier none protects
The little valley, lo! a serpent moved;
Such gave, perhaps, the bitter fruit to Eve!
Midst flower and herb it trailed its evil length;
From time to time it curved its head around,
Licking its back as smooths a beast its fur.
I did not see, therefore I cannot tell
How the celestial hawks first winged their flight,
But well I saw them both when on the wing.
So soon it felt their green wings cleave the air,
The serpent fled, and back the angels flew
With equal swiftness each one to his post.
That spirit who the Judge's call had heard
Through all the threatening of that near assault,
Not for an instant loosed from me his gaze.
"If the clear lamp which leadeth thee on high
"Find in your will such fuel to its flame
"As it may need to reach the crowning ridge,"
So it began, "if thou hast truthful news
"Of Val di Magra, and the region near,
"Tell it to me, for there I held the rule;
"Conrado Malespino is my name,
"But not the first, the youngest in descent;
"Here is made pure the love I bore to mine."
"Ah!" was my answer to him, "in thy land
"I never was; but where do men reside
"In Europe's breadth to whom it is not known?

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" The fame which brings such honour to thy house,
" Thy nobles vaunt, and the whole region vaunts,
" So that he knows it who was never there.
" And as I hope to win the ascent, I swear
" Thy honoured people have not ceased to hold
" The grace of open hand and valorous heart;
" Nature and habit so exalt their rights,
" That though the wicked chief the world may bend,
" They keep the right path and the bad disdain."
" Go on," he said; "the sun shall not repose
" Seven times upon his couch, and which the Ram
" With its four feet encloses and conceals,
" Ere this thy courteous thought be deeply sunk,
" Nailed in the very centre of thy brain
" With surer nails than words of other men,
" If no event the course of judgment turn."

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CANTO IX.

Dante is overcome by sleep. His dream. On awakening he ascends with Virgil to the gate of Purgatory. The Vicar of St. Peter is seated there, who, on Dante's humble prayer, gives him entrance, after having with his sword made seven marks upon his forehead.

The concubine of ancient Tithon rose
Now brightening on the horizon's eastern edge,
Fled from the circle of her lover's arms;
Her forehead rich and radiant with the gems
Pointing the Scorpion's form in heavenly space,
Which with its frigid tail the nations smites;
And now of her ascending strides the night
Had two completed, where we then were placed,
And of the third the wing already drooped,
When I, who had the Adam in me still,
Conquered by sleep, upon the grass reclined
There where we then were seated, all the five.
It was the time near to the break of morn
When the sad wailings of the swallow wake,
Perhaps in memory of her early woes,

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And at which time the mind, then most relieved
From the dull flesh and least by thought oppressed,
Is in its visions nearest the divine.
I in my sleep an eagle seemed to see,
High soaring, golden feathered, in the heavens,
With wings expanded and with earthward flight.
I seemed to be where force immortal tore
From his companions the young Ganymede,
And snatched him to the councils of the gods.
Within myself I thought, perchance this bird
Strikes only here, and haply nowhere else
Its talons deign to bear aloft the prey.
It still appeared some instants more to wheel,
Then terrible as lightning down it swooped,
And bore me up towards the place of fire;
There we both seemed to burn, the bird and I,
And the hot fire of fancy was so fierce
It forced on me the breaking of my sleep.
Just as the trembling fear Achilles shook
When with awakened eyes he looked around
And saw, and seeing knew not where he was,
When from the Centaur to the Ægean Isle
His mother bore him, sleeping in her arms,
Whence by the Greeks borne off in later time;
So did I shudder, soon as from my face
My sleep had fled, and I became in hue
Like to one frozen by excess of fear.

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I found my comfort at my side, alone.
High by two hours already was the sun,
And tow'rds the sea shore was my visage turned.
" Have thou no fear," then said to me my lord;
" Be thou assured our place is rightly here;
" Restrain it not but give thy vigour play,
" For now thou art to Purgatory come;
" Behold the rampart closing it around,
" Behold the entrance where this seemeth cleft.
" Before and in the dawn which heralds day,
" When slept thy spirit in its home of flesh
" Upon the flowers which paint the ground below,
" A lady came, and said—' I Lucia am;
" ' Let me this mortal take who sleepeth here,
" ' And light and easy I will make his path.'
" Sordel remained, and the other gentle forms;
" She took thee up, and as the day grew bright
" Upward she sped, and I upon her steps.
" She placed thee here, but first she pointed out
" The open entrance with her beauteous eyes,
" Then she and sleep together passed away."
Like one who comes to certainty from doubt,
And in assurance loses sight of fear,
At the same moment truth uncovered lies;
So was I changed, and as my leader saw
My care had vanished, to the terrace he
Moved on, and I behind him towards the height.

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Reader, thou seëst that in flight sublime
My matter soars, therefore with greater art
Wonder thou not I seek to give it strength!
We now approached, and to the part we came
Where I had seen a fissure in the rock,
Just like a gap which disunites a wall.
I saw a portal, and three steps beneath
Leading towards it, differing each in hue,
And one who guarded it, yet silence held.
And as my eye quick and more quick became,
I saw him seated on the upper step,
So bright, his glorious aspect made me shrink.
And in his hand a naked sword he bore,
From which on us the rays reflected shone;
I sought to face the glare but sought in vain.
"From where ye stand say what may be your wish?"
So he began: "and where your escort here?
"Look well that harm come not of your ascent."
"One sent from heaven who knoweth these things well,
"But short space since," my master answer gave,
"Said to us—'Thither go; behold the gate.'"
"So may thy hope be quickened by her grace,"
With gentle courtesy the warder said;
"Approach ye then, and to the steps advance."
And so we came; and of those steps the first
Was of white marble, and so clear and bright
I there was mirrored as I am in life.

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The second one was more than purple black.
And of a rock half burnt and rough in grain,
Split in its length and in its traverse too.
The third, which rose more massive in its bulk,
Seemed to me porphyry, and its colour flamed
Like the red blood which springeth from the veins.
Resting upon this step his either foot,
God's holy angel on the threshold sate,
Which looked as if substance of adamant.
Up the three steps most willingly I went,
Led by my guide, who said—" Now humbly pray
" That from the gate the fastenings be unloosed."
I fell devoutly at his sacred feet;
That he would open, I in pity craved,
But before this thrice did I smite my breast.
Seven times the symbol P upon my front
With his sword's point he wrote: " When once within
" See that thou wash," he said, " those wounds away."
Dry dust and ashes from a hollow thrown
Would give the colour which his vestment bore,
And forth from under this two keys he drew;
One was of silver, and the other gold.
First with the white, then with the yellow key
The gate he opened to my great content.
" Whene'er it happens one of these two fail
" With perfect ease within these wards to turn,"
He said to us, " there is no entrance here;

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" Most precious is the one, but greater skill
" And power we need to make the other act,
" For it is this which maketh loose the knot.
" Peter, who gave it, said, 'twere better I
" Should err in opening than in keeping closed,
" When once the sinner prostrate at my feet."
Then on its hinge he turned the holy gate ;
" Enter," he said, " but be ye warned of this,
" Who looketh back is thrust again without."
And when upon the grating pivots moved
The solid pillars of the sacred door,
All of the strong and sounding metal formed,
So loud and harsh rolled not the jarring hinge
Of the Tarpeian, when, removed by force
The good Metellus, it was left despoiled.
I turned around on the first sound intent,
And *Te Deum laudamus* seemed to hear,
In words with sweetest melody conjoined.
The impression made upon my listening sense
By what I heard was such as it receives
When many voices swell the organ's peal,
And the words drowned in music come and go.

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CANTO X.

The Poets climb by a tortuous and rough path to the first terrace of Purgatory. They observe representations of great humility carved upon the marble rock. They encounter spirits of the proud bent to the earth beneath heavy loads.

After we passed the threshold of the gate,
Disused through man's deep lust of evil things,
Which makes him see the right way in the wrong,
I from the sound perceived that it had closed.
And if mine eye had turned around to look,
Where for the fault had I found good excuse?
Up by a fissure of the rock we climbed,
The sides of which receded and advanced,
As flies the billow and again returns.
" Here we require to use some little skill,"
My master said, " so that we closely hold,
" Now here, now there, to the receding side."
Our steps were therefore with such caution made
That the moon's darkened limb already lay
Upon the couch of her returning rest

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Ere we were yet beyond this needle's eye.
But when we stood on free and open ground,
Where rose the mountain back and upward massed,
Weary I was, uncertain were we both
Which way to turn; we paused upon a plain
More still and lonely than the desert's path.
From the bank's edge which bounds the aerial void
To the rock's foot which springs at once aloft,
The measure was three times the length of man.
As far as eye with winged glance could reach,
Or to the right hand, or towards the left,
The cornice everywhere appeared alike.
We had not yet our footsteps stirred thereon
When I perceived that the encircling rock,
Which gave no promise to the climber's foot,
Was of white marble, and so wondrous rich
With sculpture, Polycretus not alone,
But Nature's self had there by contrast lost.
The angel who to earth the message bore,
Seal of that peace, wept for through weary years,
Opening to man the long forbidden heaven,
Here stood before us in such truthful guise,
Cut in the rock in attitude so sweet,
He did not seem an image that was mute,
One might have sworn he heard him say, "All hail!"
For here was sculptured she of women blest,
Who turned for us the key of love divine;

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And in her gesture were these words impressed,
Ecce Ancilla, as defined and clear
As any figure moulded upon wax.
" Let not one place alone thy thoughts absorb,"
My gentle master said, who by me stood
Close to the part where beat the hearts of men.
On which I moved mine eyes, and I beheld
Behind the blessèd Mary, on that side
Where he was standing who had led me there,
Another story graven on the stone ;
So passing Virgil, I approached the spot
That to my vision it might clearly come ;
And there, deep cut in the same marble rock,
The car and oxen drew the sacred ark,
Dread lesson for an uncommissioned act !
A crowd before it seemed to be, the whole
Forming seven choirs, which stirred my senses twain ;
The eye said yes, the ear denied the song.
So in like manner with the incense fumes
Which were here figured ; for the eye and nose
In discord judged, one yes, the other no.
Humbly before God's ark the Psalmist went,
Dancing and leaping with uplifted robe,
And in the act was more and less than king.
Over against him from the window forth
Of a great palace, Michal wondering gazed,
With glance of grieving and indignant scorn.

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I moved from where I stood and turned my steps
Closely another story to observe,
Which behind Michal from the marble gleamed.
There on the rock the glorious fame was told
Of Rome's great prince, whose lofty virtues stirred
The heart of Gregory to his conquering prayer—
I speak of Trajan, the great Emperor—
And a poor widow to his bridal clung,
Clothed in the robe of weeping and of woe.
The space around with a great crowd was filled
Of cavaliers, and proud above his head
The golden eagles swayed before the wind.
Among all these this woful woman's lips
Seemed thus to speak—" Vengeance, great lord, I claim
" For my slain son, and for my breaking heart."
And thus he seemed to answer—" Wait thou must
" Till my return ;" and she exclaimed—" My lord"—
Speaking like one impatient in her grief—
" And should'st thou not ?" " Then he who fills my seat
" Will do thee right." " Another's deed of good,
" What will it profit thee, thine own forgot ?"
On which he said—" Be comforted, 'tis just
" That I fulfil my duty ere I move ;
" Justice demands it, pity holds me here."
He whose eternity knows nothing new,
Before us placed this speaking visible,
New unto us, for such no man conceived.

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Whilst with delight my wondering eyes surveyed
Those images of deep humility,
Through the Great Sculptor precious to behold,
" Lo ! from the right with steps sedate and slow,"
The poet murmured, " many people come ;
" To the high circles they shall be our guides."
Mine eyes which sought so earnestly to see
Sights new and strange, for which they ever crave,
Yet turned towards him with no motion slow.
I would not, reader, thou should'st swerve dismayed
From thy good purposes, because thine ear
Perceives how God willeth the debt be paid.
Fix not thy thought upon the form of pain ;
Think of what follows ; think that at the worst
It cannot reach beyond the final doom.
Then I began—" Master, those moving now
" Towards us seem to lack all personal shape ;
" I know not what they are, so dim my sight."
He answered me—" The character severe
" Of their great torment bows them to the ground,
" So that mine eyes held them at first in doubt ;
" But look thou sharply there and recognise
" What cometh to thy view beneath these stones,
" Now thou canst see how each to earth is crushed."
Ah, ye presumptuous Christians ! proud and weak !
Who are in mental vision so infirm,
Ye put your confidence in crooked ways ;

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Do ye not then perceive that we are worms,
  Born the angelic butterfly to form,
  Which flies to Justice, where no covering hides?
Whence comes this swelling pride into your souls,
  Since ye are naught but insects incomplete,
  Mere worms in which the full formation fails.
As to support the floor or prop the roof
  Brackets are used with human figures quaint,
  Having the knees drawn up towards the breast,
Making by false appearance real pangs
  In him who sees them; so it was with those
  Whom I now saw, when I more closely looked;
In truth they were contracted more or less,
  As less or more their burden weighed them down;
  And one, who in his acts more patience shewed,
Weeping, appeared to say, "I can no more."

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CANTO XI.

Prayer of the Spirits. The Poets encounter Humbert de' Conti di Santafiore; also Oderisi di Gubbio. With the latter they converse on the vanity of worldly fame.

" Oh Lord, our Father, Thou who art in heaven,
" Not there restrained, but from Thy greater love
" To the first fruits of Thy eternal word;
" Thy name be hallowed, and Thy mighty power
" By all created things, for it is good
" To render to Thy holy wisdom thanks.
" Thy kingdom's peace, oh let it come to us,
" For we to it are powerless to attain,
" If it come not, all our endeavours fail.
" As of their wills, Thy blessed angels make,
" With full Hosannahs, sacrifice to Thee,
" So unto Thee may men their wills on earth.
" Give unto us each day our daily bread,
" For without this through life's rough wilderness,
" He who most labours only backward goes.

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" And as the evil they have done to us
" We pardon others, do Thou us forgive,
" Most Merciful, nor our poor merits weigh.
" Let not our strength so easily made weak
" Be brought to trial with the ancient foe,
" But free us, Lord, from him who thrusts to sin.
" This last petition, oh thou Lord most dear,
" Not for ourselves we raise, who have no need,
" But for the living who remain behind."
Thus for themselves and us with holy wish
In prayer those spirits moved beneath the weight;
As we have sometimes in our slumbers dreamt,
Passing with agony unequalled round
By the first terrace, weak and weary all,
Purging away the blindness of the world.
If in their place for us they ever pray,
What then in ours ought to be said or done
By those whose wish has the true root of grace?
To them our aid is due to cleanse the stains
They bear from hence, that sin-relieved and cleansed
They wing their flight to the eternal stars.
" Ah! so may justice and sweet piety
" Your burdens lift that your free wings may move,
" And waft you upwards as your wishes urge;
" As ye shall show on which side to ascend
" The way is shortest; and if more than one,
" Tell us which passage has the gentlest slope.

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" For he who cometh with me is so crushed
" With the gross clothing of his Adam's flesh,
" That though in spirit willing, slow he climbs."
The answering words that were returned to those
Which from the lips of him I followed fell
We heard, but whence they came was not perceived ;
But this their burden—" Come ye by the bank
" To the right hand with us, and you will find
" A pass which may be climbed by living man ;
" And were it not the hindrance of this stone
" Which holds the mastery o'er my haughty neck,
" And forces me to bow my face to earth,
" This man still living whom thou hast not named,
" I had beheld, to see if he were known,
" And sought his prayers to ease this cruel load.
" I was Italian, of great Tuscan birth,
" Guglielm Aldobrandeschi was my sire
" I know not if his name ye ever heard ;
" The ancient blood, the most illustrious deeds
" Of my high ancestors so made me proud,
" That heedless of our common origin
" I with such depth of scorn all men despised,
" Death was my meed, as know the Siennese,
" And every child in Campagnatico.
" Humbert I am, and not to me alone
" Was pride a curse, for all my kindred fell
" Dragged by its evil power to evil end.

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" And here I bear this load until the hour
" God's law be satisfied, what I did not
" When with the living with the dead I do."
Listening I downward held my face inclined,
And one of them, it was not he who spake,
Writhed round beneath the weight which bore him down,
And saw me, recognised me, and cried out,
Fixing his eyes on me with effort sore,
Who wholly stooping moved along with them;
" Art thou not Oderisi, then," I said,
" Honour to Gubbio, honour of that art,
" They call in Paris to illuminate?
" Brother," he said—" With greater beauty smiles
" The paper Franco Bolognese paints;
" All honour now is his, mine but in part;
" This courteous truth surely I had not said
" While I was living, from the burning thirst
" Of that great excellence my soul desired
" Of such high pride here do I pay the cost;
" And never here had been, were it not so,
" That, still with power to sin, I turned to God.
" Oh empty glory of all human power,
" How brief a space thy summit keepeth green,
" Unless an age of ignorance succeed!
" All once believed that Cimabüe stood
" In painting first; now Giotto is the cry;
" So that the former's fame in shadow lies;

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" So too from one the other Guido took
" The glory of his tongue, and he perhaps
" Is born who from their niches both shall move.
" For worldly fame is but a breath of wind
" Which is now coming here, now going there ;
" Changing its name because it changes place.
" What more of fame were thine, if in old age
" Loosed from thy body, than if death had been
" Ere yet thine infant toys were cast aside,
" Before a thousand years have passed : a space
" To the Eternal as an eyelid's flash
" Is to the slowest of the heavenly spheres ?
" He who before thee lingers so in step,
" Of whom all Tuscany the praise extolled,
" Scarce in Sienna claims a whisper now,
" Where he was lord that hour destruction fell
" On the mad rage of Florence, then as proud
" As at the present time corrupt and vile.
" Your fame is like the colour of the grass
" Which comes and goes, discoloured by the power
" Which from the earth drew forth the tender blade."
And then I said—" Thy true words fill my heart
" With right humility, and check my pride ;
" But who is he of whom thou spak'st but now ?"
He answered me—" Salvani is his name,
" And he is placed by his presumption here,
" Which all Sienna sought to make his own.

" Thus has he gone, thus goes without repose
" Since his death hour; such is the payment claimed
" For satisfaction when too much is dared."
Then said I—" If that spirit which delays
" Repentance to the closing term of life
" Remain below, and here may not ascend;
" If holy prayers have been of no avail
" Before the measure of his life was run,
" How did he gain permission to come here?"
" At his most glorious hour of life," he said,
" Self-moved, upon Sienna's public place,
" Shame and his pride all cast aside, he stood,
" And there his friend from the great woe to free
" Which in the prison of King Charles he bore,
" Till every nerve was trembling, low he bent.
" I say no more; I know my words obscure,
" But hence some little space and to thy mind
" Full explanation shall thy townsmen give,
" This act released him from those outer bounds."

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CANTO XII.

Dante beholds the ground on which he treads covered with marvellous representations of the punishment of pride. The Poets are met by an Angel, who guides them to the second terrace. He removes from Dante's forehead one of the seven marks. On this his ascent becomes easier.

Paired and like oxen coupled in a yoke,
Onward I laboured with this burdened soul,
So long as was my gentle master's will;
But when he said—"Leave him, and pass thou on,
"For here 'tis good that both with sails and oars
"As he hath power each one should trim his bark;"
Upright as Nature wills it I resumed
My body's posture, though as yet my thoughts
Remained to me both humbled and depressed.
I then bestirred myself with willing heart
My master's steps to follow, and we both
Already showed that we were light of limb,
When he thus spake—"Turn to the ground thine eyes,
"It will be good, and lighten much thy way
"To see the floor on which thy footsteps fall."

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As to keep memory of men alive
Above the graves where lie the buried dead
Emblems are carved to tell their names and fame,
Whence often swells again the heavy tear
By the sharp agony remembrance brings,
Of which the pious only feel the pang,
So saw I there, but with the master's touch,
Sculptured with all the rigid rules of art,
The whole advancing cornice of the mount.
Him I beheld by the Creator formed
Nobler than other creatures, down from heaven
Swift as the lightning's flash in ruin fall.
There I Briareus saw, his form transfixed
By the celestial dart, and his huge frame
In gelid death lie heavy on the earth.
I saw the god of Thymbra, Pallas, Mars
Not yet unarmed, standing around their sire,
Gazing upon the giant's scattered limbs.
Nimrod I saw, at his proud structure's foot,
Bewildered and confused, beholding those
Who in Sennaar his godless work had shared.
Oh, Niobe; how sorrowful thine eyes
As I beheld thee sculptured on the path,
Amidst twice seven of thy slaughtered brood!
Oh, Saul; how vividly thy sword did seem
In death to pierce thee on Gilboa's height,
No more to feel the rain or tender dew!

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Oh, weak Arachne! thee, too, I beheld
Already almost spider on the rags
Of thine own work for thine own grief begun.
Oh, Rehoboam! in thine image now
There seems no sign of threat, but full of fear
A chariot bears thee from the people's rage.
Here on the marble pavement too was shewn
How costly was the price Alcmæon made
His mother for the fatal necklace pay.
Here too the sons were pictured as their hands
In his god's temple Sennacherib smote,
And how they left him there, he being dead.
Here was the ruin told and carnage foul,
When ruthless Tomyris to Cyrus said,
"Blood was thy thirst, I surfeit thee with blood."
Here too was imaged the Assyrian rout
In fatal flight from Holofernes slain,
And here the relics of the murderous act.
Troy I beheld in ashes and in wreck;
Oh, Ilion, in how base and vile a state
Here in thy sculptured image thou art seen!
How great the master and how fine the art
Which brought forth shade and feature, and could thus
Even in the subtlest genius wonder rouse.
Living the living seemed, and dead the dead,
Who saw the events themselves no better saw
Than I who stooping on their image trod.

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Ah, ye proud sons of Eve with haughty necks,
  Lift up your heads ; hold not your faces down
  Lest ye should see your own most evil path !
More of the mountain's circuit we had made,
  Of the sun's course a greater space was run
  Than might a mind pre-occupied conceive ;
When he, who ever watchful, moved in front,
  Began to speak—" Hold thou thy head erect,
  " This is no time to be engrossed in thought ;
" Behold an angel maketh haste to come
  " Hither towards us ; see, her service done,
  " Of the day's handmaids, now the sixth retires !
" Array thy face and acts in reverence due,
  " So that he please to guide our upward course ;
  " Remember thou this day returneth not."
I was well used to hear his warning words
  That I should lose no time ; in this, indeed,
  He could have nothing said I had not done.
The creature beautiful towards us came,
  Clothed in white raiment, and his face was like
  Unto the trembling of the morning star.
His arms he opened, then his wings he spread :
  " Come ye," he said, " the steps are near, and now
  " Lightly and easily the height is gained."
To this announcement, ah, how few respond.
  Oh, race of men, born for an upward flight,
  Why fall ye downward at the slightest breeze ?

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He led us on to where the rock was scarped,
And there in front of me he beat his wings,
Then gave me promise that my way was sure.
As on the dexter hand to climb the mount
Where stands the church from which the eye commands
The well-ruled town by Rubecante's bridge,
To break the labour of the steep ascent
Steps have been fashioned at the time when yet
The public books were safe, the measures true,
So was the slope made easy which descends
Here from the upper circuit steeply down,
But the high rocks press close on either side.
As we moved onward voices reached our ears;
Beati pauperes spiritu, they sang;
No tongue may tell the sweetness of the strain!
Ah, how unlike the entrance gates which lead
To hell's dark depths! for here with gentle song
We enter in, and there with fierce lament.
Already we had scaled the holy steps,
And now my body strangely lighter seemed
Than I had thought it in the plain below.
So I said—"Master, tell me has some weight
"Been lifted off from me, for as I mount
"Scarcely a touch of weariness I feel?"
He answered me—"When the remaining wounds
"Still on thy forehead, but now faint in form,
"Shall like the first one wholly disappear,

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" Then shall thy feet so fully own thy will,
" Not only shall no weariness be felt,
" The upward impulse shall itself be joy."
And then it was I did like those who walk
Unwitting of some object on their head,
Till from the signs of others doubt awakes;
The hand is lifted to remove the doubt,
It seeks, and finds, and so an office does
Which in such case sight hath not power to do;
So with my right-hand fingers spread I found
Six letters only which the angelic guard
Of the two keys had on my temples marked,
And as my act he noted, smiled my Chief.

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CANTO XIII.

The Poets are now on the second terrace. There the sin of envy is punished. The Spirits have their eyelids sewed together with iron threads. Sapia, of Sienna, describes her great sin.

Upon the summit of the steep we stood
Where at a second stage the mount is cut,
Which purifies the climber from his sin.
Here, and in manner like, a terrace winds
Around the mountain, as the former did,
Only that now the arc more quickly curves.
No shade is there, no image for the eye,
But smooth the rock, and the whole pathway seemed
With the dull colour of the stony mass.
" If here we wait till there be one to ask,"
The poet reasoned ; " much indeed I fear
" The path we choose no speedy path will prove."
Then looking on the sun with steady gaze,
He fixed his right foot as the centre point,
And brought the left side of his body round :

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" Oh, pleasant light, trusting to which I pass
" Through this new way, lead us therein," he said,
" And as thou willest make our entrance here.
" Thou to the world art heat ; thou giv'st it light ;
" If by no other reason we be moved,
" Thy rays should ever be to us the guide."
From hence and far as we might count a mile,
So far already had we journeyed on,
In little time and with an earnest will,
When flying towards us, felt by inner sense
But not by eye perceived, sweet spirits spake
A courteous welcome to the feast of love.
And the first voice of these which floated past
" *Vinum non habent*" said, with utterance high,
And the sound doubling rolled away behind.
And before this had wholly died away
No longer to be heard, a second spake—
" I am Orestes ;" this too lingered not.
" Ah, father," then I said, " whose voices these ?"
And as I asked the question, spake a third,
" Give unto those who hate you love for hate !"
" This circle," were my gentle master's words,
" Lashes the sin of envy, yet the cords
" Which form the lash are moved by very love ;
" The sound which curbs it hath another tone,
" This as to me it seemeth, thou shalt hear
" Ere to the pass of pardon thou be come.

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" But let thy glance be keen to pierce the air,
" And thou shalt see a crowd before us placed,
" Each seated by the shelving wall of rock."
Then soon mine eyes a wider vision took ;
I looked before me and saw spirits clad
In mantles coloured of the stony hue.
And after making some few onward steps,
I heard a cry—" For us, oh, Mary, pray !
" And you, oh, Michael, Peter, all ye saints !"
No man so hard now walketh upon earth,
I think not one, who had not felt a touch
Of fond compassion at the sight I saw ;
For when to them I had approached so close
That all their actions were distinct and clear,
Mine eyes were moistened with a heavy grief.
Covered they seemed to be with haircloth vile,
And by the shoulder each supported each,
And the rock served as rest unto them all.
'Tis thus the blind who have no means of life
Demand their alms upon indulgence days ;
And one his head upon another stoops,
For in a stranger pity soon is moved,
Not by the sound so much of grievous words
As by the sight of that which bringeth grief.
And as the sun strikes not the sightless orbs,
So with the spirits I but spake of now,
The light of heaven wills not to give its joy ;

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For in them all the lids are pierced and sewed
With iron threads, as to the hawk untrained
Is done by men its restlessness to tame.
It seemed to me an outrage, as I went,
On others thus to look, myself unseen.
To my wise counsellor I therefore turned:
And well he knew what I, though mute, would say,
For my request he waited not to hear,
But said—"Be brief, and to thy purpose speak."
Virgil approached me; at that side he came
Where from the terrace easy is the fall,
Because no bank encircles it around,
Whilst on the other side of me were those,
The souls devout, in whom the suture dread
Forced out the choking tears which bathed the cheeks.
I turned to them and utterance gave to thought:—
"Oh, shades, assured the light supreme to see,
"Sole object of your great and deep desire,
"Soon may the grace divine remove the scum
"Which soils your conscience, that serene and bright
"Through it may flow the river of your mind;
"So that you tell (a knowledge sweet and dear!)
"If an Italian soul be here with you;
"It may be well for it that this I learn."
"Ah, brother mine, each soul is citizen
"Of one true city; but thou wouldest say,
"Who had in Italy a pilgrim lived."

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It seemed to me this answer reached mine ear
From some small space in front of where I stood,
Therefore a nearer vantage place I sought;
And amidst others one I saw who looked
With air expectant, and the manner this,
The chin was held in air as do the blind.
" Spirit," I said, " cast down that thou mayest rise,
" If it were thou who answer made but now,
" Make me to know thy dwelling place and name."
" I of Sienna was," she said, " and here
" With these I purge the foulness of my life,
" Weeping to Him to grant us of Himself.
" Though Sapia called, yet was no wisdom mine;
" And I was happier at another's woes
" Than ever happy at my own success.
" And lest thou think me false to thee in word
" That I was as I tell thee, list and judge.
" My years already rolled their downward curve
" When nigh to Collè on the battle-field
" Those of my city held their foes in fight,
" And God I prayed for that which He had willed.
" Here they were routed, and their steps were turned
" In bitter flight; and as the chase I saw,
" Joy that all joy surpassed, my being seized;
" So, insolent, I lifted up my face,
" Crying, Oh God, I fear Thee never more;
" As did the thrush in the warm winter day.

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" Peace with my God I sought at the last hour
" Of ebbing life, but the great debt I owed
" Still had by my repentance been unpaid
" Had not the saintly Piero my soul
" Held in the memory of his holy prayer,
" And this for his dear charity alone.
" But who art thou who, as thou passest on,
" Seekest to know our state with eyes unclosed,
" As seems to my belief, and breathing speak'st ?"
" Mine eyes," I said, " may here be darkened too,
" Yet only a short time, for small the offence
" In me so far as envy makes my sin ;
" Greater by far the dread which fills my soul
" With anxious thought of the great pains below,
" The load of which already weighs me down."
" Who then," she said, " hath been thy leader here,
" If to return again thy purpose be ?"
" He with me here," I said, " who speaketh not,
" And I am living, therefore make request,
" Elected spirit, if thou would'st that I
" Should in thy service use all mortal means."
" Ah !" was her answer, " an unheard of thing
" Is this great proof that thou art loved of God !
" Therefore at times grant me thine aid of prayer :
" And I beseech thee by thy fondest wish,
" If ere in Tuscan land thy footstep fall,
" That to my kin thou bringest back my fame ;

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" Them thou wilt find amid the people vain
" Who hope in Talamone, and whose hope
" Will prove more empty than Diana's stream ;
" But more than this their admirals will rue."

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CANTO XIV.

Guido del Duca di Brettinoro and Messer. Rinier di Calboli describe in terrible colours the state of the tribes inhabiting the valley of the Arno, and also the very evil condition of the Romagna.

" Who is the man who makes our mountain's round,
" Before the stroke of death has freed his wings,
" And whose eyes shut and open as he wills ?"
" I know him not ; he cometh not alone.
" Thou who art nearest him, make thou request,
" And that he speak, be courteous thine address."
Thus did two spirits, stooping each to each,
Hold converse there of me, at my right hand ;
Then to accost me threw their faces back.
And one then spake—" Oh spirit, who enclosed
" Still in thy body wend'st thy way to heaven,
" Of thy great kindness cheer us ; tell us why
" Thou comest, who thou art, for thou to us
" Art miracle as great of grace divine
" As a thing seen and never seen but once."

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I answered—" Through mid Italy there spreads
" A little stream, at Falterona born ;
" A hundred miles of course contents it not.
" From near its banks I bring my body here ;
" To tell thee who I am would useless prove,
" For yet my name hath but a feeble sound."
" If to thy meaning I correctly pierce
" With my intelligence," then answered he
Who first had questioned, " thou of Arno speak'st."
To him the other said—" Why doth he hide
" The name by which that river should be known,
" Like a man dealing with some dreadful thing ?"
That spirit who was questioned paid the debt
Of answer thus—" I know not ; but 'tis just
" The name of this great valley perish quite ;
" For from its sources (where so pregnant swells
" The mountain chain whence is Pelorus rent,
" That in few places are the signs so full,
" To where again that moisture is restored,
" Which the sun's breath draws upward from the sea
" To form the vapours which the rivers feed ;)
" Virtue is shunned, as men a serpent shun,
" From the foul mischief of the place itself,
" Or evil habit which to evil thrusts.
" The very nature hence of those who dwell
" In this most wretched valley is so changed,
" They seem in Circe's pastures to have fed.

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" Midst savage swine, alone for acorns fit
" Rather than food ordained for human use,
" Its scanty flow the river first directs ;
" Then downward coming snarling dogs it finds,
" Grinning with fury greater than their power ;
" From these it turns disdainfully aside.
" Still it flows on, and as it fuller swells
" The more it finds its dogs becoming wolves.
" Ah cursed and most miserable ditch !
" Descending still through many a depth profound
" It meets with foxes so replete with fraud
" They fear no mastery of mind or will.
" I will not pause because by others heard,
" And good 'twill be for this one to recal
" That which in me the soul of truth reveals.
" Thy nephew now I see, and he in chase
" Follows these wolves, and high upon the bank
" Of the fierce river spreads his terror round.
" He sells their flesh still in the fibre quick,
" And then he slays them like a worn-out ox ;
" Many of life, himself of fame he robs.
" From the sad wood he comes all bloody forth,
" And leaves it so that hence a thousand years
" Its first fair verdure still hath no return."
As at the warning of some coming loss
The listener's face is troubled and disturbed,
Whate'er the quarter whence the peril strikes ;

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So I beheld the other spirit stand,
Turned round to hear, disquieted and sad,
Soon as he grasped the meaning of the words.
The speech of one of them, the other's look
Gave me an earnest wish to know their names;
With strong entreaty then I made request,
On which that spirit whom I first had heard
Resumed—" Thou willest that I condescend
" To do for thee what thou would'st not for me;
" But since in thee God wills His grace divine
" To shine so brightly, I may not refuse.
" Know then that I Guido del Duca am;
" So hot with rancour was my blood inflamed,
" That had I chanced to see a happy man
" Thou would'st have seen my face with envy pale.
" I sowed the seed, behold the straw I reap!
" Ah, race of men, why place the heart's desire
" On things which man's companionship exclude!
" Lo, this is Rinier—honour and the boast
" Of the great house of Calboli, from which
" None has since sprung to be his valour's heir.
" And not his race alone have been despoiled,
" 'Twixt Po and mountain, Reno and the sea,
" Of the high quest of truth and noble aims;
" For so surcharged the land within these bounds
" With poisonous shoots, too late were now th' attempt
" To will a culture when the power is gone.

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" Where is good Licio, and Manardi? where
" Pier Traversaro and Carpigna? ah!
" Ye Romagnuoli, ye are bastards grown;
" When in Bologna root a Fabbro takes,
" When a di Fosco in Faenza rules,
" The noble stem of an ignoble stock!
" Marvel thou not, oh Tuscan, that I weep
" When to my thought Guido da Prata comes,
" And Ugolino d' Azzo—Tuscan too!
" Frederick Tignoso, and his band of friends,
" The Traversaro, Anastagi, both
" Of the more noble heritage deprived;
" The knights and dames—their trials and their deeds
" Which wakened in us courtesy and love,
" Where hearts in wickedness are now so sunk.
" Ah, Brettinoro, why not cease to be,
" Since thine own family have fled thy home,
" And others many who would guilt avoid.
" Bagnacavallo heirless; it is well!
" But not so Castrocaro; Conio worse,
" Who of such evil counts strives to breed more.
" And the Pagani, dead their demon sire,
" Will fairly rule, but not so well that long
" Of them shall live the testimony pure.
" Oh, Ugolin de' Fantoli, thy name
" Shall rest secure, for none from thee shall spring
" A shade of darkness over it to cast.

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" But Tuscan, pass thou on ; to me to weep
" Is greater pleasure than it is to speak,
" So hath thy country's sorrow wrung my heart."
We knew that these most gentle spirits heard
Our further footsteps ; silence then in them
Gave us assurance that our way was right.
As we went onward and advanced alone,
Like to the thunder when it cleaves the air,
There came a voice towards us, and it said—
" Lo, every one who findeth me will slay."
It vanished then, as dies away the peal
If suddenly the tempest cloud is rent.
Scarce had one voice left silence on our ear,
When lo, another cried with mighty noise,
As when it thunders, peal succeedeth peal—
" I am Aglaurus, who was turned to stone."
Then to the Poet I more closely clung,
Walking behind him, and no more in front.
Now was the air in every quarter still,
And then he spake—" Such was the curbing rein
" Which man required to hold him within bound ;
" But you the bait receive, and so the hook
" Of the old foe attracts you to himself,
" Therefore avail but little, curb or lure.
" Called by that heaven which circling wheels around
" To note the eternal beauties it displays,
" Still to the earth your eye is ever prone,
" Therefore He chastens you who knoweth all."

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CANTO XV.

The Poets still ascend. They encounter a glorious Angel. Virgil discourses upon envy. The Poets arrive at the circle where anger is punished. Dante has a wonderful vision, on awakening from which he and Virgil proceed onward. They are overtaken by a dense mist.

Between the birth of day and third hour's end,
As much as eye may measure of the sphere,
Which like a restless child knows no repose,
So much towards its setting there appeared
Still to the sun remaining of his course;
'Twas evening there; on earth 'twas dead of night.
And the rays struck us full upon the face,
For we had so far circled round the mount,
That now our course was straight towards the west;
When lo! I felt constrained to bend my head
Before a splendour greater than the sun,
And things so new my soul with stupor filled,
Wherefore I raised my hand towards the arch
Above my eyebrows, making it a shade
To dim the fierceness of the o'erpowering glare.

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As when from water or from mirrored glass
To the point opposite a ray rebounds,
Reflected off by the same law which rules
Its incidence, and at like angle leaves
The perpendicular on either side,
And this both science and experience teach;
So did my sense seem stricken by the light
Of reflex glory which before me shone,
With act so rapid was my look withdrawn.
"My gentle father, what is this," I said,
"From which I vainly seek to screen mine eyes,
"And which towards us seemeth to be moved?"
"Wonder thou not," he answered, "that as yet
"Thine eyes are dazzled by the angelic host.
"He cometh, sent man's upward flight to urge;
"Soon shall the time be when these things to see
"Shall not be difficult, but give delight
"So far as nature grants thee power to feel."
When to the blessed angel we had come,
With a glad voice he spake—"Enter ye here,
"These steps more gently than the others rise."
We left the place, and now we upwards clomb,
When clear "*Beati misericordes*" swelled
In chant behind us, and "Thou Conqueror shout."
We two went on, my Chief and I, alone
Still upward climbing, and I thought the while
That from his words much profit I might gain;

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So turning towards him, proffered this request—
" What meant that spirit of Romagna there
" Where he made mention of companionship?"
On which he said—" Of his besetting sin
" He knew the cost; it is no wonder then
" That he reprove, to lessen weeping here.
" For your desires all thitherward are turned
" Where by community the part is less,
" Wherefore the breath of envy stirs your sighs.
" But if the love of the celestial sphere
" Turn to a heavenward seeking your desires,
" No fear of this will in your bosom rest.
" The more there are who call the blessing theirs,
" The more they each a larger share possess,
" And love burns brighter in that home of joy."
" But I am further from content," I said,
" Than if at first thou hadst refused to speak,
" And more of doubt my intellect distracts.
" How can it be that a divided good
" Makes more possessors richer with itself
" Than if the same were by the few possessed?"
He answered thus—" Because thy mind is fixed
" With such intentness on the earth alone,
" Thou gatherest darkness from the light of truth.
" The good ineffable and infinite
" Which is above, expansive flows to love,
" As to a lucid surface comes the ray;

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" Just as the ardour burns so is it given,
" And thus the further charity extends,
" The eternal love with the extension grows.
" The more be those above who this perceive,
" More good there is to love and more they love,
" And like a mirror each reflecteth each.
" And if to satisfy I fail the proof,
" Thou shalt see Beatrice, and she will take
" Fully from thee this and all other wish.
" Make effort now that soon may disappear,
" As have the two already, the five wounds,
" For they through suffering only may be closed."
The words were on my lips—" I am content,"
When on the other circle, lo ! I stood,
And silent held me there my wandering eyes.
Sudden it seemed to me that I was cast
Into a trance ecstatic, and beheld
A temple, and a mighty crowd therein,
And near the entrance there was one who said,
With the sweet gesture of a mother's love,
" Wherefore, my son, hast thou so dealt with us ?
" Behold thy father and myself have sought
" Thee sorrowing ; " and as she ceased to speak
This, my first vision, lo ! had disappeared.
And then I saw another, with such tears
Still heavy on her cheeks as grief distills
When mighty indignation gives it birth.

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And thus she spake—" If thou the city rul'st,
" The name of which was strife unto the gods,
" And whence all science streams in glory forth,
" Avenge thyself of those audacious arms
" Which, oh Pisistratus, our child embraced."
Gentle the lord did seem to me and kind,
For calm he looked as he the answer made—
" What shall we do to those who wish us ill
" If those who love us we may so condemn?"
And next I saw a crowd on fire with rage,
Stoning to death with stones one who was young;
With loud accord, " Slay! slay!" they shouted all;
And him I saw stooping beneath the death
Which weighed him down already to the earth;
But in his eyes lay wide the gates of heaven.
To the high God in his great woe he prayed—
" Oh, lay not Thou this sin unto their charge!"
And from his aspect pity sprang to life.
When from its outward flight my soul returned
To those true things which of themselves exist,
I recognised how real were my faults.
Then said my leader, unto whom I seemed
Even as a man just struggling out of sleep—
" What aileth thee, feeble thou art and faint;
" For thou hast come more than a half a league
" With shaded eyes, and trembling in thy limbs,
" Like one whom wine or sleep hath overcome."

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" Sweet father, wilt thou listen?" then I said,
" And I will tell thee what my visions were
" The time my limbs so failed to do their work."
" Hadst thou," he answered, " worn a thousand masks
" Upon thy face, from me had not been hid
" One of the very least of all thy thoughts;
" This vision was that thou might'st not refuse
" Thy heart to open to the streams of peace
" Which from the fount eternal are dispersed.
" I did not ask thy state for reasons such
" As his who looks with eyes which cannot see
" When separate from the soul the body lies;
" But to give courage to thy feet, I asked.
" The slothful thus to quicken there is need,
" That they may keep the periods of their watch."
We onward by the vesper light advanced,
So far observant as the eye had power
Against the dazzling of the evening rays.
And lo! I saw a vapour slowly float
Gathering towards us, gloomy as the night.
To guard ourselves from this no means were ours;
It dimmed our vision, made the air impure.

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CANTO XVI.

The Poets encounter a noble Lombard, Marco by name. He complains that virtue is now banished from the world. He reasons profoundly upon this.

Darkness of hell and of a night in which
No planet shines beneath a starless heaven,
Deep howsoever the obscuring cloud,
Were not unto mine eyes so thick a veil
As this dark vapour which enveloped us;
Nor to the sense so palpable and gross.
Mine eye impatient I was forced to shut,
Wherefore my escort, ever true and wise,
Towards me drew, and gave his shoulder's aid.
As close behind his guide the blind man moves,
That he may stray not, nor in straying strike
On what might injure or perhaps might kill;
So through the foul and biting air I went
With listening ear to these my leader's words—
"See that we be not parted thou and I."

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Voices I heard, and each uplifted seemed
In prayer for peace and mercy, unto Him
The Lamb of God who taketh sins away.
Still *Agnus Dei* were the opening words;
All had one utterance, and one manner all,
So that amongst them perfect concord reigned.
" These, are they spirits, master, whom I hear?"
I asked, and he replied:—" Thou judgest right;
" From anger's bonds they seek themselves to free."
" Who then art Thou to whom the vapour yields,
" And who now speak'st of us as if even yet
Thou didst by kalends take the note of time?"
Words such as these fell from the lips of one,
On which my master said:—" Do thou reply,
" And ask if it be here we make the ascent."
" Oh creature," then I said, " who here art cleansed
" To meet immaculate thy Maker's eye;
" Be thou my guide, and wonders thou shalt hear."
" I follow thee so far as I have leave,"
He said, " and if the vapour darken sight,
" Hearing will serve to join us in its stead."
Then I began:—" With this my robe of flesh
" Which death dissolves, I take my upward course,
" And through the realms of Hell am hither come.
" And if embraced by the great grace of God,
" So that He wills I to his courts attain
" By ways of which the world no knowledge hath,

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" Conceal not who thou wert before thy death,
" But tell me ; say if the right path I take,
" And let your words be guides to our advance."
" Lombard I was, and Marco was my name,
" I knew the world and well that virtue loved
" At which now no one ever points a thought ;
" To gain the ascent straight upwards lies the path,"
He answered, and he added :—" And I ask,
" When thou hast reached the summit, pray for me."
And thus I spake :—" My faith is pledged to do
" That which thou askest, but within my breast
" A doubt must burn, if no solution come.
" Single it was at first, but doubled now
" By thy opinion, which confirms the words
" Here and elsewhere, with which I couple it.
" The world, 'tis true, is as a desert bare
" Of every virtue, as thy words describe,
" And with all wretchedness both clothed and filled ;
" But I do pray thee, show to me the cause,
" That I may see, to others make it known,
" For some in heaven place it, some on earth."
A sigh profound which grief drew lengthening out
He uttered first, and " Brother," then he said,
" The world is blind, truly thou comest thence !
" Ye who are mortal every cause refer
" At once to Heaven, as if the world's events
" Moved, as it moves, of pure necessity ;

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" If it were so, in you would be destroyed
" Freedom of will, and justice be no more
" A joy for good men, and for bad a grief.
" From astral influence your movements spring ;
" I say not all, but granted it be so,
" Light ye are given to know the good from bad ;
" And this free will ; which, if it standeth firm
" In its first struggles with these starry powers,
" And be by wisdom fed, o'ercometh all.
" To mightier power, to essence more divine
" Free ye are subject ; this in you creates
" The mind o'er which the stars hold no control ;
" And if the present world be gone astray,
" The cause is in yourselves, in you is sought,
" And I shall now thy true informant be.
" Forth from His hand, and by His love beheld
" Ere yet in being, like a babe it comes,
" Which weeping, smiling, plays its infant part,
" The helpless soul, which nothing knows save this,
" That issuing from a glad Creator's hand,
" It gladly turns to all that giveth joy.
" In trifling good it first a savour finds,
" Then self-deceived it thereto following clings,
" If guide or curb give not the rightful bent.
" Therefore the need of law to be a check,
" Therefore the need of one to rule, who should
" Of the true city see at least the tower.

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" The laws exist, but who of them takes heed ?
" No one—because the pastor first in place
" May chew the cud, but not divide the hoof.
" Hence those who see their guide's sole aim to be
" The good which is the lust of their own hearts,
" Make it their food, and take no thought beyond.
" Thou canst not fail to note that evil rule
" Is the great cause the world is sunk in sin,
" And not the nature in mankind corrupt.
" It is Rome's way which gives the world its faith,
" Two suns to have, that clearly she may show
" The two great pathways of the world and God.
" One hath destroyed the other, and the sword
" Is with the staff conjoined ; together both
" Must of necessity in working fail,
" Because thus joined they lose their mutual dread.
" If thou believ'st me not, look to the fruit,
" For every plant is judged of by its seed.
" Where fertile roll the Adigé and the Po,
" Valour and courtesy were wont to shine
" Before by trouble Frederick was assailed ;
" But now with safety any one may pass
" Who would have shunned that land for very shame,
" To speak with good men or consort with them.
" Three aged men still there remain in whom
" The old time chides the new, and long it seems
" Till God translate them to a better life ;

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" Conrad of Brescia, and the good Gherardo,
" And Guido de Castel, though better named
" The simple Lombard, as the Frenchmen do;
" And so it happens that the Church of Rome,
" By taking to itself the double power,
" Falls in the mud, itself and charge defiled."
" Thou reasonest well, my Marco," then I said;
" And now I see why from the heritage
" The sons of Levi their exclusion found.
" But who is this Gherardo whom thou nam'st
" As a bright remnant of a race extinct,
" And in reproof of this most wicked age?"
" Thy speech conveys temptation or deceit,"
He answered, " for thou speak'st the Tuscan tongue,
" Yet seem'st of good Gherardo naught to know.
" By other surname I do know him not,
" Unless his daughter Gaia furnish one.
" God rest with you, further I may not pass;
" I see the glow which through the vapour streams
" And spreads its rays around: I must depart
" Ere yet the angel comes who now is near."
And having said he would not listen more.

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CANTO XVII.

The Poets come forth from the mist, and hail the rising sun. Dante has another vision, in which he sees instances of the vice of anger. The Poets attain a higher terrace. Virgil points out to Dante how love is the source of all virtues and vices.

Remember, reader, when among the Alps,
If by the mist surprised, through which the light
Came dim as through the film in the mole's eye,
How as the vapour, moist and dense, began
To clear away, the solar disc appeared
With feeble ray, struggling for passage through;
Let then thy facile fancy shew thee how
To see the sun as he at first did seem
Once more to me, now sinking to his bed.
So keeping time with my true master's pace,
Step to his step, forth from the cloud I came,
By rays already in the low grounds dead.
Oh, thou Imagination, which at times
So takest self from us we nought perceive,
Although a thousand trumpets sound around,

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What moveth thee, if not from sense derived?
Light moveth thee, of the heaven's essence pure,
Self-stirred or guided by the will divine.
Of her impiety who was transformed
Into the bird which loveth most to sing,
The image to my fancy was portrayed;
And here my mind was so shut up in thought
Within itself, that nothing from without
Could for the time therein reception find.
Next on my heightened fantasy there fell
One on a gibbet, and despite and rage
Were in his face, and with such look he died;
Around stood Ahasuerus, the great king,
Esther his spouse, and Mordecai the Just,
Righteous, as we are told, in word and act.
Soon as this image broke and disappeared,
In very manner as a bubble doth
When fails the water under which it formed,
There rose unto my vision a young girl
Sore weeping, and she said—"Alas, oh Queen!
"Why in thine anger didst thou will thy death?
"Slain that to thee Lavinia be not lost,
"Yet me thou hast lost, me who sorrow first
"For thee, my mother, ere the other dies."
As slumber breaketh when some sudden flush
Of light strikes full upon the eye unclosed,
And flutters broken ere it wholly die,

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So from its lofty flight my fancy fell
  Soon as my face was stricken by the light,
  More bright by far than eyes are wont to see.
Where then I was I turned around to note,
  When a voice said—" The ascent beginneth here!"
  All other thought this banished from my mind;
And my desire so keenly was aroused
  To ascertain who spake the words I heard,
  It might not rest till we were face to face.
But as before the sun which vision dulls
  And in excess of light his figure veils,
  So did my power of seeing fail me here.
" This is a spirit divine who needeth not
  " We ask his guidance in our upward course,
  " And is himself with his own light concealed.
" He does with us as dealeth man with man,
  " For he who would be asked, yet sees the need,
  " Already in his heart denies the prayer.
" To this high summons let our feet respond,
  " And let us brave the ascent ere darkness fall,
  " For then we may not till return of day."
So spake my guide, and we together turned
  Our quickened footsteps upwards to a stair,
  And the first step no sooner had I reached
Than I felt touched as by a moving wing
  Fanning my cheek—" *Beati*," spake a voice,
  " *Pacifici*, who know not sinful wrath!"

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So high in upper air now o'er us streamed
  The sun's last rays, soon followed by the night,
  That the stars shewed themselves on every side.
" Alas, my strength, what maketh thee so faint? "
  Within myself I said, for now I felt
  That in my limbs the moving power was gone.
We were then standing where the steps had ceased
  Upward to rise, and motionless we were,
  Just as a ship which cometh to the shore.
I paused a moment so that I might hear
  If any thing in the new circle stirred;
  Then to my master turned me round, and said—
" Dear father, tell me, what is the offence
  " Those purge away where even now we stand?
  " If our feet stir not, be not so thy words! "
" 'Tis here," he answered, " where the love of good
  " Which sloth has weakened gaineth strength again;
  " Here with new vigour plies the sluggish oar.
" But that thy comprehension be more clear
  " Give heed to what I say, and thou shalt pluck
  " Some good and wholesome fruit from this delay.
" Creator nor created—mark, my son! "—
  He then began, " were ever without love,
  " Or natural or of will—thou knowest this;
" The former ever without error was,
  " The latter may through evil objects err,
  " And from too great or from too little force.

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" Still while directed to the higher good,
" And in the lower, keeping limit just,
" No guilty pleasure can from it arise.
" But when it turns to evil, or with zeal
" More or less fitting, runs the course of good,
" Against its Maker then the creature works.
" Hence 'tis for thee this truth to comprehend ;
" Virtue in you is rooted in desire,
" And every act which punishment deserves.
" Now because love can never turn away
" From the well-being of its subject self,
" Things that have power to love hate not themselves.
" And since no creature can in self subsist,
" Or by itself from the first cause apart,
" This, whence itself derived, it cannot hate.
" It follows, then, if rightly I define,
" The ill desired is to your neighbour's hurt,
" And this in three ways in your wretched clay.
" One in the oppression of his fellow man
" Hopes for distinction, with the craving wish
" That he may thrust him from his high estate.
" One fears to lose fame, favour, honour, hope,
" Because in these another standeth high,
" And so he grieves and seeks the other's fall.
" And one, who through some injury suffers shame,
" So that his heart is greedy for revenge,
" Makes this revenge the study of his thoughts.

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" This threefold evil lust those there below
" Lament in tears. Now mark the other kind
" Which in perverted method seeks for good :
" Each one confusedly a good conceives,
" And longs to win a rest unto his soul,
" For to attain it every mortal strives.
" If he be slothful to perceive this good,
" Or to acquire it, on this terrace then,
" After true penitence, he bears his pains.
" There is another good, not good for man ;
" It is not happiness—'tis not the good
" Essence of every fruit and root of price :
" The love which clings too much to this will find
" Its place of tears in the three upper rounds ;
" But how the tri-partition be arranged
" Silence I hold ; 'tis for thyself to learn."

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CANTO XVIII.

Virgil reasons profoundly upon love. He shows how the soul may by reason and free will command its appetites. The Poets encounter the Abbot of St. Zeno. Dante falls into a trance.

When he had closed his argument profound,
My teacher looked me closely in the face,
To judge by it if I were satisfied;
And I, whose thirst for knowledge still was great,
Silent in word, thought in myself, "Perchance,
"Asking too much, I do but trouble him."
But he, my truthful father, who perceived
The timid wish I did not dare express,
Speaking himself, encouraged me to speak.
Wherefore I said—"Perception grows so quick
"In thy wise light, that clearly I discern
"All that thy reasoning carries and contains;
"Yet I beseech thee, father, dear and kind,
"Shew me that love to which may be referred
"Every good action, and alike the bad."

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" Fix upon me," he said, " the piercing eyes
" Of thine intelligence, then shall be clear
" The errors of the blind who would be guides.
" The sentient soul, created prone to love,
" Turns ready to whatever giveth joy
" Soon as it wakens unto pleasure's act.
" Your power to apprehend from real things
" The image draws, unfolding it within,
" So that the mind to it attracted turns;
" And if so turned, with bent entire and full,
" This bent is love, and nature is this love,
" Which is to you through pleasure linked afresh.
" Then as fire moveth upward, being formed
" In essence there to rise where in the sphere
" Of its own matter longer it survives;
" So the mind pleasure-led possession craves,
" Which is a spiritual motion, with no rest,
" Till in fruition of the thing beloved.
" Now may be seen how much the truth is hid
" From those the many who affirm that love
" Of every kind is a true thing to praise.
" Because although, perchance, it shall appear
" Good in its nature, yet not every stamp
" Is good because the wax impressed is good."
" Thy words and close attention of my mind,"
I answered him, " have love to me revealed,
" Yet they have filled my mind with greater doubt;

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" For if in us love springs from outer things,
" And if the soul be moved by these alone,
" Or right or wrong, with it no merit lies."
He said—" As much as human reason sees
" Here I can tell; further thy hopes must rest
" On Beatrice, for 'tis the work of faith.
" All essence spiritual which is distinct
" At once from matter, and with it conjoined,
" Contains specific virtue in itself,
" Which is not, save in operation, felt,
" Nor is apparent but from its effects,
" As in the plant the green leaves prove the life.
" Wherefore, from whence the intelligence may come
" Of first ideas, man no knowledge hath
" Nor whence the lust of the first appetites,
" Which are in you as instinct in the bee
" To make the honey; and this first desire
" Hath not in self merit of praise or blame.
" But since to this all others closely hold,
" The reasoning power within yourselves exists
" To keep in ward the threshold of assent.
" This is the source in which originates
" Merit of deed in you, just as it may
" Desire of good or evil seek or shun.
" Those who by reasoning nature's depths attained,
" Perceived this innate liberty of man,
" Therefore their lessons to the world bequeathed.

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" Whence we establish, if necessity
" Give birth in you to every appetite,
" The power to keep it in yourselves resides.
" By noble virtue Beatrice implies
" Freedom of will, therefore have thou a care
" This to remember if with thee she speak."
The moon, towards the midnight slow to rise,
Made the stars seem to us more rare and few,
And like a rounded vessel red with fire
It coursed against the heavens by the same paths
The sun inflames, such time as those at Rome
See him 'twixt Corsica and Sardinia set.
And that most gracious spirit, and through whom
Is Pietola more than Mantua famed,
The burden of my questions ceased to bear;
So I who had in reasons plain and clear
To all my questions answer full received,
Stood like a drowsy man with thought confused.
But soon this drowsiness was chased away,
And suddenly by spirits who behind,
And having turned the circle, towards us came.
And as Ismenos and Asopus see
Along their banks the riot and the throng
Of Thebans seeking Bacchus in their need;
So round this circle with a curving step,
As it appeared to me, the spirits came,
Spurred by right love and by a holy will.

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Soon were they far above us, for with speed
They moved along, this great and mighty throng:
And two in front, weeping the while, exclaimed—
" Unto the mountain, Mary, sped with haste;
" And Cæsar, to make Lerida his own,
" Marseilles assaulted, and then coursed to Spain."
" Haste, hasten ye, lest the good time be lost
" By lukewarm love." The others after cried—
" For zeal, for what is good refresheth grace."
" Oh, ye in whom a fervour now intense
" Redeems, perhaps, the negligent delay,
" Which made you slothful in the act of good;
" This one who lives, and surely I speak truth,
" Longeth to mount soon as the sun shall shine;
" And say on which side near us lies the pass."
Such words as these dropped from my leader's lips,
And of those spirits one thus answered—" Come
" Closely behind us, entrance thou shalt find;
" We are so full of anxious wish to move,
" We cannot stop, and thy kind pardon pray,
" If duty here discourtesy may seem.
" Verona's Abbot in San Zeno I,
" Under that virtuous Barbarossa's rule,
" Of which afflicted Milan speaketh still.
" And there is one with one foot in the grave
" Who soon will mourn that monastery's state,
" And grieve that ever there he held the power;

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" Because his son, in his whole body foul,
" And fouler in his mind, and bastard born,
" He there has set in the true pastor's place."
I know not if he further spake or ceased,
So great the distance now 'twixt him and us,
But this I heard and willingly retained.
And he mine aid in every time of need,
Said—" Turn thee hither, see the two who come,
" Their sins of sloth biting into their souls ! "
Last of the troop, they cried—" Death overtook
" The nation for whose passage gaped the sea,
" Before the Heirs of Promise Jordan saw ;
" That people too whom weariness forbade
" To reach the goal, with old Anchises' son,
" But a life stripped of glory made their choice."
Then when between those shades and us so great
Became the distance they were seen no more,
Within my breast a new thought found its seat,
Of which were born other and diverse ones,
Amidst the which so dreamily I roved,
Mine eyes were closed in contemplation vague,
And my imaginings were turned to sleep.

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CANTO XIX.

Dante's vision. The Poets arrive at the fifth terrace. Here the spirits are purified from the sin of avarice. The Poets encounter Pope Adrian the Fifth of Casa Fieschi.

That hour in which diurnal warmth no more
Hath power to mitigate the cold of night,
Checked by earth's damps or Saturn's frigid ray;
When his *Fortuna Major* in the east
Before the dawn the geomancer sees
Rise by a path, but for a little dark,
Into my dreams a stammering female came,
With squinting eyes and on distorted feet,
With maimèd hands, and of a death-like hue.
I gazed on her, and as the sun gives strength
To the cold members stiffened by the night,
So did my gaze make loose to her the tongue,
And afterwards, and in short space of time,
Her body upright was, and the dead face
Was coloured with the much-wished hue of love.

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When she had thus found liberty of speech,
So sweetly waked her song, most difficult
Had been to me attention to withdraw.
" I am," she sang, " I am the siren sweet
" Who in mid sea the mariners bewitched,
" So dulcet are my strains to those who hear.
" I drew Ulysses from his errant path
" By my sweet music ; he who shares my home,
" He rarely leaves, all gives him such content."
She had not ceased, her lips were yet unclosed,
When, lo ! a holy lady, full of zeal,
Stood close beside me, covering her with shame.
" Oh, Virgil, Virgil ; who," she cried, " is this ? "
With angry mien ; and he towards her came,
His eyes fixed wholly on her modest form.
She seized the other, opened her in front,
Tearing her vestments, and her foulness shewed,
The smell from which aroused me from my sleep.
I turned mine eyes, and the good Virgil said—
" At least three times I called thee ; rise and come ;
" Let us find opening for thine entrance in."
I rose : and now filled with the growing day
Were all the circles of the holy mount,
And the new sun behind our shoulders shone.
I followed him, bearing myself like one
Who hath a spirit full of heavy thought,
And with his body makes a semi arch.

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And then I heard—"Approach; behold the pass!"
And this was said in tone so sweet and kind,
No such is heard in this the land of men.
With wings wide open, like a swan's they seemed,
He who thus spake turned him in upward flight
Through the two faces of the flinty rock;
And then with fluttering pinions fanned the air,
Affirming those *qui lugent* to be blessed,
Whose souls find consolation in themselves.
"What ails thee that thine earnest gaze is still
"Fixed on the earth?" then spake to me my guide,
Both of us lower than the angel placed.
Then I—"To doubt so great am I now moved
"By the fresh vision which enchants my soul,
"I am all powerless to withdraw my thoughts."
"Hast thou this ancient sorceress seen," he said,
"Sole cause of all the grief above us now,
"Or seen how man may free him from her toils?
"Let this suffice; haste with a firmer step,
"Look to the lure which the Almighty King
"In the celestial spheres eternal rolls."
As to his feet first turns the falcon's glance,
Then at the well-known call he stretches limb,
Attracted by the keen desire of food,
So was my act; and so where gapes the rock
To give a passage unto him who climbs,
I mounted upwards to the encircling plain.

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On the fifth round as I in freedom stood,
There many souls I saw, and they all wept,
And flat on earth they lay, their faces down.
Adhæsit pavimento anima mea,
I heard them say, and with such sighs profound,
Scarce to the hearing came the words they spake.
" Oh God's Elect, whose pains and sufferings here
" Are made less hard by justice and by hope,
" Direct us now towards our lofty goal."
" If ye be come safe from our prostrate doom,
" And wish more speedily the way to find,
" Keep then your footsteps ever to the right."
Thus asked the poet, and the answer rose
Somewhere in front of us ; I then perceived
His words did prove the other mystery hid.
I turned mine eyes to meet my master's look,
And with a cheerful sign he gave me leave
To speak the wish depicted on my face.
When I had power to ask as will might prompt,
I drew towards that creature as he lay,
Whose words had first called notice to himself,
Saying—" Oh spirit, in whom pain matures
" That without which thou canst not turn to God,
" Suspend for me awhile thy greater care.
" Who wert thou, wherefore upward turned thy back?
" Tell me, and say can I for thee obtain
" Something from whence I, who am living, came."

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He answered—" Thou shalt know why heaven hath willed
" We to itself should turn our backs; but first
" *Scias quod ego fui successor Petri.*
" 'Twixt Chiaveri and Siestri rushes down
" A river beautiful, and from it spring
" The name and title of my blood and race.
" One month, and scarcely more, I had the proof
" What the great mantle weighs to keep it pure;
" For light as feathers seem all other loads.
" Tardy to me, alas! conversion came;
" But when elected Roman Pastor, then
" Came the discovery—life is but a lie.
" I saw, thus high, the heart no quiet knew,
" Nor in that life could higher station gain,
" Wherefore the love of this one fired my soul.
" Up to this point wretched and distant far
" My soul was from its God, greedy of all,
" And, as thou seest, I am punished here.
" That which our avarice did is here declared
" In the purgation of converted souls,
" And pain more bitter owneth not this mount.
" Just as our eye lifted not up its glance
" To the high heaven, fixed upon earthly things,
" So justice here constrains us to the earth.
" As avarice extinguished our desire
" For what was good, making its practice void,
" So justice here keepeth us bounden firm,

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" Holden and closely fastened hand and foot ;
" And till such time as the just Lord may please,
" Shall we be stretched immoveable as now."
I knelt before him, and I wished to speak,
But as my lips were moving, he perceived,
Yet by ear only, that I reverence made.
" What reason hast thou thus to bend ? " he said.
" For thy great dignity," was my reply ;
" An upright conscience warned me to the act."
" Up to thy feet ! up ! up ! " he answer gave ;
" My brother, I thy fellow servant am,
" With thee and others to one Puissance High ;
" If ever the most Holy Gospel truth,
" Which sayeth *neque nubent*, thou hast heard,
" Well dost thou know the meaning of my words.
" And now depart ; I will not thou should'st stay,
" For thy delay my weeping interrupts,
" With which I purge that sin of which thou spak'st.
" She who is named Alagia is my niece,
" By nature good ; oh, never may our house
" By bad example taint her soul with crime !
" And she alone remains to me on earth."

CANTO XX.

A Spirit narrates instances of virtue in opposition to avarice. The Poets encounter Hugues Capet, who breaks forth in an indignant invective against his descendants. The mountain suddenly trembles and all the Spirits join in singing *Gloria in excelsis*.

Ill fights a will against a better will,
Therefore against my pleasure him to please,
The sponge not yet replenished forth I drew.
I stirred myself and Virgil turned his steps
Close by the rock, where hindrance there was none,
Like one who walks on narrow battlements.
For those who weeping shed drop after drop
Forth from the eyes, that sin which rules the world,
Approached too near us on the outer side.
Be thou accursèd, oh thou ancient wolf!
More full of raven than all other beasts,
In thy fierce hunger, deep, insatiate!
Ye stars whose revolutions are believed
By some to rule the state of things below,
When cometh He who shall this beast expel?

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We onwards went with footsteps short and slow,
And I observant of the ghosts who filled
My sense most piteously with moans and tears;
When in our front I heard a voice exclaim,
" Oh blessed Mary," midst the weeping throng,
Just as a woman cries in pains of birth;
Then in continuance, " poor wert thou indeed,
" As all may know by that bare house of rest
" Where thou didst lay thy holy burden down.
" Oh good Fabricius, still I further heard,
" Virtue with poverty thou mad'st thy choice
" Rather than flowing riches gained by crime."
These words to me such mighty pleasure gave,
I hurried on to know, and to observe
That Spirit from whose lips they seemed to fall.
His speech was also of that generous gift
Which on the maidens Nicolas bestowed,
From foul dishonour to protect their youth.
" Oh soul who speakest words so good to hear,
" Say who thou wert," I asked, and why alone
" Thou dost recall those noble acts of praise?
" Thy words shall not be without recompense
" Should I return the journey to complete
" Of this short life which flieth to its close."
He answered:—" I will tell thee—not that help
" Can come to me from thence, but because grace
" Sheweth so full in thee and thou not dead.

" I was the root of that most evil plant
" Whose baleful shade darkened all Christian lands,
" So that men rarely gather wholesome fruit.
" But if in Douay, Ghent, in Lille, and Bruges,
" There dwelt the power, the vengeance would be near
" Which fills my prayer to Him who judges all.
" On the world's stage Hugues Capet was my name ;
" Philip and Louis were my body's fruit,
" Who have but lately ruled the realm of France.
" A Paris butcher owned me for his son.
" When all were gone of the first race of kings,
" Save one, and he in ashen garment clad !
" Firmly within my hands I found the rein
" Which ruled the realm, and of such mighty power,
" And conquests new, and countless friends was full,
" That of the widowed crown the royal state
" Upon my son's head rested ; and in him
" Began of consecrated kings the roll.
" So long as the great dowry of Provence
" Yet took not from my house restraint of shame,
" Small in its power it yet no evil did.
" But there at length with force and lies began
" Its rapine, and for this, amends to make,
" Ponthieu it took, Norman and Gascon land.
" Charles came to Italy, and for amends,
" A victim made of Conradin ; and then,
" Still for amends, Aquinas sent to heaven.

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" I see a time, hence but a little space,
" Which draws from France another Charles to give
" A better knowledge of himself and friends.
" Unarmed he goes save with the lance alone
" With the which Judas jousted, and so thrusts
" That in her entrails Florence owns the wound.
" Therefore possession none, but sin and shame
" Shall be his gain, the graver this for him
" As he more lightly these transgressions holds.
" The other, landed prisoner from his ship,
" I see in traffic foul his daughter sell,
" As corsairs traffic make with other slaves.
" Oh avarice what more evil canst thou do,
" Since on my race thou hast so fixed thy grasp
" For their own flesh they now no longer care?
" But that the ill to do and done seem less,
" I see the lilies in Agnani flaunt,
" And in His vicar see a captive Christ.
" Once more I see Him in derision held;
" I see renewed the vinegar and gall,
" And betwixt thieves once more I see him slain.
" I see the second Pilate's cruel hate
" Not yet content, but without right or law
" Into the temple bear his greedy will.
" Ah Lord supreme when shall the joy be mine
" To see the vengeance which yet hidden lies
" Sweetening the anger of thy secret mind.

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" That which I said of Her the only spouse
" Of the most Holy Spirit, making thee
" For explanation then towards me turn,
" Formeth the subject of our every prayer,
" Whilst day endures, but soon as cometh night,
" We in its stead another language hold;
" We then the story of Pygmalion tell,
" Who traitor, parricide, and thief became
" Through his most lustful gluttony for gold;
" And craving Midas, and the wretched doom
" Which followed his most covetous request,
" Ever the cause of laughter to mankind.
" Of foolish Achan then remembrance comes,
" How he purloined the spoil, and Joshua's wrath
" Aroused, which here appears to rack him still.
" We then Sapphira and her husband taunt,
" We laud the hoofs which Heliodorus struck,
" And the whole mountain's circuit sounds the shame
" When Polymnestor Polydorus slew.
" And last of all, lo Crassus! is the cry;
" Tell, for thou knowest, what the taste of gold.
" We speak, at times one high, another low,
" As the impulsion stirs which moves our speech,
" Now with a greater, now a lesser force.
" Therefore in all the good we speak by day,
" I was not then alone, but here and near,
" No other Spirit raised his voice so high."

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Now from the speaker we departure took,
And strove with effort to o'ercome the way,
So far as power was granted us to do;
When I perceived, and like a falling sound
The mountain tremble, and I shook with cold
Such as he feels who goeth to his death.
Not with such mighty throe did Delos shake
Before Latona made in it a nest
Where to give birth to the twin eyes of heaven.
On every side of us a cry arose,
So great, the Master turning to me, said,
"Whilst I remain thy guide cast doubt from thee."
Gloria in excelsis Deo cried they all,
So far as I might judge on the near ground
Whence it was possible the cry to hear.
We stood immoveable, and in suspense,
As did the shepherds who first heard that song,
Until the tremor ceased and the hymn closed.
Our holy journey then we recommenced,
Noting the Spirits who lay stretched on earth
Returned already to their old lament.
No ignorance ever with such mighty strife
Stirred in my breast the craving wish to know,
If in this matter memory do not err,
As that I seemed in thinking now to have;
For in the haste I dared not question ask,
Nor in myself could see the reason clear,
So timid I went on and full of thought.

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CANTO XXI.

The Poets encounter a spirit who explains the trembling of the mountain. He then declares himself to be the Poet Statius. His great rejoicing when he is made aware that he is in the presence of Virgil.

The natural thirst not to be satisfied
Save with the water of that spring of which
The woman of Samaria asked to drink,
Tormented me, and the haste urged me sore
O'er the encumbered road behind my chief,
And although just, those judgments made me sad.
But lo! as in his gospel Luke relates,
Christ to the two wayfaring men appeared,
Himself no longer holden of the tomb;
A spirit rose behind us, and it came
Looking upon the crowd which prostrate lay,
And ere we had perceived it thus it spake.
"Oh ye my brothers, peace to you from God!"
We quickly turned, and Virgil gave the sign
Of salutation as became the words.

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He then commenced, " In counsel of the blest
" May thou be placed in peace by that just court,
" Which makes eternal banishment my doom!
" What meaneth it, and why so quick your pace,
" If ye be spirits yet unfit for Heaven?
" And so far up who hath your escort been?"
My teacher said, " If thou observe the marks
" Which this one bears, and which the angel made,
" Soon wilt thou see his right to join the elect.
" But because she who spinneth day and night
" Hath from the distaff not unrolled the flax
" Which Clotho places and prepares for all;
" His soul, a sister to thy soul and mine,
" Up hither coming cannot come alone,
" Because to see, as we, it hath not power.
" So I was drawn forth from the ample maw
" Of Hell, to show him things which I will show,
" And be his guide, far as my knowledge goes.
" But tell me, if thou knowest, why such shocks
" Lately the mountain shook and why as one,
" All seemed to cry, even to its watery base?"
By this request he touched the very point
Of my desire, so that the hope assured
Made less the greedy craving of my thirst.
He then began—" There is no single thing
" Which happeneth ever in this holy mount
" In course disordered, or of usage strange.

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" From elemental change this place is free ;
" From what itself Heaven from itself receives
" Can there be change ; no other may subsist.
" Hence comes it, neither hail, nor rain, nor snow,
" Hoar frost nor dew on higher level fall
" Than the three steps which form that little stair.
" Thick clouds appear not, nor the thinner cloud,
" Nor flash of lightning, nor the rainbow's arch,
" Which on the earth is ever shifting place.
" Dry vapour rises not above the step,
" The highest of the three of which I spake,
" Where rest the soles of Peter's Vicar's feet.
" Perhaps below, it trembles more or less,
" But from the wind in the earth's caverns hid,
" I know not how ; up here it never quakes.
" It trembles here when some soul knows itself
" Made pure, so that it now may rise and move
" In upward flight, amidst the exulting shout.
" The will itself its own purgation proves,
" For wholly free its company to change,
" It grasps the soul, and gives its wishes play ;
" Good from the first, but by the longing checked
" Which divine justice, in this place of pain
" To wish opposes, as with sin on earth.
" And I who here have lain in this great woe
" Five hundred years and more, feel only now
" Freedom of will to seek a better home.

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" Therefore the trembling was, and thou didst hear
" The holy spirits of the mountain praise
" That Lord, to whom I pray to haste them home."
Such words he uttered, and because the joy
Of drinking deepens, as the thirst is deep,
I need not tell how mighty was my gain.
Then my wise Leader :—" Now I see the net
" Which holds you here, and how it is made loose,
" Why the mount trembles, why your common joy.
" Let it now please thee, tell us who thou wert,
" And why so many ages here have lain,
" If thy discourse I rightly comprehend ?"
" At that high time good Titus, with the aid
" Of the great king, avenged the sacred wounds
" From which gushed out the blood which Judas sold ;
" The name most lasting, which men honour most
" Was mine on earth ;" the spirit answer made ;
" Famous I was by it, not yet by faith ;
" So dulcet and melodious were my strains,
" From my Toulouse Rome drew me to herself,
" And there I merited the myrtle crown.
" In the world's mouth still I am Statius called ;
" I first of Thebes, then of Achilles sang,
" And in this second work life ebbed away.
" To my poetic fire those sparks were seed
" Which warmed my spirit from the flame divine
" Where countless thousands have found living light ;

" I mean the Eneid, mother to my muse,
" And in the Poet's art of verse my nurse ;
" Without it mine were words of little weight.
" And to have lived on earth when Virgil lived,
" I would have willingly remained a year
" More than I must before my exile's close."
Hearing these words, towards me Virgil turned,
With face which in its silence said, " Be still ;"
But will is not all powerful in its strength ;
For smiles and tears follow with act so quick
Upon the passion which gives birth to each,
They least obey the will in truest heart.
I only smiled as one who makes a sign,
On which the shade was silent, and he gazed
Into the eyes, where meaning sheweth most.
" As thou wouldst labour to a happy end ;"
He said, " why did thy face, this instant past,
" Show unto me the glancing of a smile ?"
Now am I caught on this side and on that !
One signs to silence, and the other prays
My speech, I sigh and I am understood.
" Tell him," my master said, " and have no fear,
" In what thou sayest, but speak and let him know
" That which of thee so earnestly he asks."
Wherefore I said, " Perhaps thy wonder wakes,
" Oh ancient spirit, at my passing smile,
" But I would rather admiration rouse.

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" He who directs my sight to heavenly things,
" He is that Virgil who gave thee the strength
" Boldly to sing of men, and of the gods.
" If for my smile thou seek'st another cause,
" Set it aside as false, and this believe,
" The cause was in the words thou spak'st of him."
At once he bent to kiss my master's feet ;
But he thus spake, " Ah brother do not this !
" For thou art spirit, and a spirit I."
Rising, he said, " Now may'st thou comprehend
" How great the love which warms for thee my heart,
" When this our ghostly nature I forgot
" Holding as substance what is only shade."

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CANTO XXII.

The Poets with Statius ascend to the sixth terrace. Statius describes his conversion to the true faith. Virgil gives him news of many illustrious individuals now in Limbo. They come to an apple tree of sweet odour. From amidst its foliage a voice exalts the virtue of temperance.

Already was the angel left behind,
To the sixth terrace our celestial guide,
Who from my forehead had effaced a wound;
And those who place in justice their delight
Were called by him *Beati*, and his lips,
With the word *sitiunt* only, closed the hymn.
And I, more light than elsewhere I had felt,
Advanced so rapidly, it was no toil
The ghosts to follow in their swift ascent.
Then Virgil thus began—"Ever that love
"Which virtue kindles other love inflames,
"If the flame outwardly itself declare;
"Whence from that hour in which from us disjoined,
"Into Hell's Limbo Juvenal went down,
"Who had made known to me thy dear regard,

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" So full of kindness were for thee my thoughts,
" That never kindlier were for one unseen,
" And this ascent through thee seems very short.
" But tell thou me, and with forgiveness kind
" If I too boldly now let loose the rein,
" And let the words thou speakest be a friend's ;
" Within thy bosom how could there be found
" A place for avarice midst so great a store
" Of wisdom which thy study had compiled ? "
Over the face of Statius at these words
First passed a smile, and then the answer came—
" Each word of thine is proof to me of love ;
" Truly it often happens things appear
" Which give false matter to enlarge our doubts,
" Because the causes of the things are hid.
" To me thy question showeth thy belief
" That I was miser in the other life ;
" The proof, perhaps, may be my presence here.
" But learn that avarice had on me no hold ;
" I touched the other vice, and countless moons
" Have seen the punishment of this excess.
" And had I not a true repentance found,
" Then when those words of thine I heard, which asked,
" As if indignant with the human race,
" ' Why dost thou not, oh, lust accursed of gold,
" ' Keep in control the appetites of men ? '
" I must have shared the rolling jousts of woe.

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" Then was it I perceived a hand might prove
" Too liberal in spending, and for this
" I sought repentance as for other sins.
" How many will with shorn heads rise again
" Blind to this sin, a blindness which destroys
" Hope for repentance, living or at death !
" And know thou this, the sin which gaineth head
" In utter contrast to some other sin,
" Here with the other hath its rankness killed ;
" Therefore if I have been among the crowd
" Who weep their avarice, to be purged like them,
" To me this happens for the opposing vice."
" But when thy verse did sing the cruel strife
" Which to Jocasta brought a double woe,"
He said who chanted the Bucolic strains,
" Judged by thy verse, when Clio shared the song,
" It seems thou wert not yet believer true
" Through faith, and without this good works are naught.
" If it be thus, what sun, what earthly light
" Dispersed the darkness, that thy sails were trimmed
" In later time the fisherman to track ? "
He answered—" Thou first pointed me the path
" Towards Parnassus, of its springs to drink,
" And first made luminous my way to God.
" Thou didst, like him who travelling in the night
" Bearing a light behind, no profit has,
" But clears the way to one who after comes,

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" When thus thou spakest—'Time renews his youth;
" 'Justice returns, and the first state of man,
" 'And a new progeny from heaven descends.'
" Poet I was through thee, Christian I am;
" But that I better shew thee what I trace,
" My hand I stretch the colouring to add.
" The world already everywhere was quick
" With the new faith, of which the seed was sown
" By the Apostles of the Eternal King;
" And thy discourse, on which I lately touched,
" Accorded so with the new preacher's words,
" It grew my custom to consort with them.
" And then to me so holy they appeared,
" That when Domitian rose to persecute,
" My tears were added to their woful plaints.
" And whilst I lived a breathing man on earth
" I gave them aid, and their pure manners waked
" Contempt within me for all other sects.
" And ere the Greeks unto the streams of Thebes
" My verse had led, I knew baptismal grace,
" But in my fear concealed my Christian faith,
" Feigning long time the pagan's false belief;
" For this luke-warmness doomed to make the round
" Of this fourth terrace o'er four hundred years.
" Thou then who didst the covering remove
" Which veiled from me the blessings I describe,
" Whilst we have time to spare in our ascent,

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" Say where may Terence be, thy friend and mine?
" Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro? if thou canst,
" And if condemned, say in what place of Hell?"
" Perseus, and these, and I and many more,"
Answered my chief, "are with that mighty Greek,
" The Muses' child beyond all other men,
" In the first circle of the prison dark;
" And there we often of that mountain talk
" Where those who nourished us for ever dwell.
" Euripides is there, Anacreon too,
" Simonides and Agatho, and more besides,
" Greek in their names, their heads with laurel crowned.
" There of the subjects of thy song we see
" Argia, Deïphila, Antigonè,
" And, as in life, Ismenè sorrowing still;
" Her too who pointed Langia's fatal spring;
" Tiresias' daughter, Tethys too are there,
" And Deidamia with her royal kin."
And now the poets both in silence stood,
Looking around them with fresh note of things,
Clear of the rocks and free of the ascent.
Four handmaids of the day now fell behind,
Their duty done; a fifth was at the pole,
Pointing still ever up its flaming horn;
When spake my chief—" Unto the outer edge
" 'Tis well, methinks, to the right hand we turn,
" Circling the mountain as our wont has been."

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Then did our custom serve to us as guide,
And with less fear of error we advanced
Through the assent of this much honoured shade.
They went before, the two, and I alone
Listened behind them to their sweet discourse,
Which waked within me all a poet's fire.
But soon their pleasant arguments were closed
For in the middle of the path we found
A tree with apples fair and sweet to smell.
And as a fir smaller and smaller grows
Upwards from branch to branch, so downward this,
As if, it seemed, no one should climb thereon.
Upon that side on which our path was barred
Fell from the lofty rock a crystal stream,
Which scattering spread its waters o'er the leaves.
The poets both drew near towards the tree,
And from amidst the foliage came a voice,
Which said—"'Tis not for you this food to taste!"
Then further said—"Much more did Mary think
"How might the nuptials be in honour full,
"Than of the mouth which pleadeth for you now.
"The antique dames of Rome were well content
"With water for their drink, and Daniel's faith
"Held food in scorn, and knowledge gained instead.
"That early age was very fair as gold:
"It gave in hunger to the acorn taste,
"And thirst found nectar in each limpid stream;

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" Honey and locusts were the Baptist's food,
" Which life supported in the wilderness,
" And hence his glory: hence none greater lived
" As in the Gospel history is told."

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CANTO XXIII.

In the sixth terrace the spirits are purified from the sin of gluttony. Their frightful leanness. The apple tree and water increase the suffering of hunger and thirst. They encounter Foresè, who breaks forth in a strain of indignant sarcasm against the shameless women of Florence.

Mine eyes were fixed upon the verdant leaves,
And whilst thus riveted like unto his
Who wastes his life in chase of little birds,
My more than father said to me; "My son,
"Quicken thy footsteps, for the allotted time
"Claims distribution in more useful ways."
I turned my face, and not less quick my step
Towards the sages, whose discourse so wise
Took from my journeying all its task of toil;
And lo! a weeping and a chant I heard,
Labia mea Domine, and they seemed
To give at once both sorrow and delight.
"Ah gentle father, what is this I hear?"
I asked, and thus he answered; "These be shades
"Who now perhaps the knot of duty loose."

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As is the wont with travellers plunged in thought,
Who others overtake to them unknown,
Turning they look, and then pass on their way;
So in our rear with a more urgent step,
Coming and passing by, on us there looked
A troop of spirits silent and devout.
Hollow and gloomy were the eyes of each;
Pale was the face, and so devoid of flesh,
That by the bones the outer shape was given.
Not Erisicthon wasted to the skin
In leanness could have been, methinks, like these,
When at its deepest raged his hungry fear.
In thought I said unto myself, behold,
Such were the people who Jerusalem lost
When Mary fastened rabid on her child.
The eye-holes seemed like rings without their gems;
He who reads *Omo* in the face of man
Might here with ease have recognised the *M*.
Who had believed, unknowing of the cause,
That water's odour or an apple's smell
Could have such ill begat, such craving gaunt?
Whilst still in wonder whence this hunger grew;
For yet the reason was not manifest
Of their great leanness and their shrivelled skin;
Lo from the hollow caverns of the head
A spirit fixed on me an earnest look,
Then loud exclaimed, "How may such grace be mine?"

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The face I never could have recognised ;
But by his voice those lineaments were known
Which in themselves were utterly destroyed ;
This spark alone sufficed to wake within
The recognition of the altered face ;
The features of Foresè then I knew.
" Ah do not heed," he prayed, " the parchèd scales
" Which from my skin all hue and colour take ;
" Heed not the sorry scantness of my flesh,
" But of thyself tell me the truth and who
" Be those two spirits who thine escort are,
" Do not delay this knowledge to impart."
" Thy face which I bewailed already dead"
I answered, " gives me now no lesser grief
" As I behold its sad disfigurement.
" In God's name tell me whence this leanness strange ;
" Ask me not whilst in wonder yet to speak,
" For he speaks ill whom other thoughts absorb."
This was his answer ; " Through the eternal will,
" That water and that plant we leave behind
" Virtue acquire, and hence my leanness comes.
" All those who now with weeping chant their woes,
" Having in gluttony unmeasured lived,
" Hunger and thirst again make holy here.
" To drink and eat our craving is inflamed
" By the fruit's odour, and the water's spray,
" Which o'er the verdure scattering spreads itself.

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" And this not only once, for on the path
" We circle round our suffering is renewed,
" Suffering I say, but comfort ought to say,
" For that same will which brings us to the tree,
" Brought 'Eli,' Eli,' to the lips of Christ,
" When by His shedded blood He made us free."
And then I said, " Foresè, on that day
" The world thou gavest up for better life
" Unto this day five years have scarcely passed;
" If in thyself the power of further sin
" Had ceased to dwell before the hour arrived
" Of that blest grief which reconciles to God;
" How hast thou thus already reached so high?
" I had believed to find thee still below,
" Where time for time misspent the balance strikes."
He answered me; " I am thus early led
" To drink the bitter sweetness of my pains
" By my own Nella's warm and loving tears;
" By prayers devout, by many a blessed sigh
" She drew me from the region of delay,
" And of the other circles made me free.
" More dear to God and more beloved of Him
" My gentle widow, I so fondly loved
" As in good working she is all alone;
" For the Barbagia of Sardinia's isle
" Is in its women modester by far
" Than that Barbagia where my wife I left.

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" Ah brother dear, what willest thou I say
" A future time now rises to mine eyes,
" To which the present shall not ancient seem,
" When from the chair the interdict shall sound,
" That the unblushing dames of Florence cease
" To show in public their uncovered breasts.
" Where shall we find barbarians, Saracens,
" Who to walk decently require the curb
" Of ecclesiastical or other law?
" And if the shameless women had been sure
" Of that which heaven even now for them prepares,
" A cry of howling had their mouths enlarged.
" For if by foresight I be not deceived,
" Their grief will come before his chin is clothed,
" Whom now a nurse's ditty soothes to sleep.
" And now, oh brother, hide thy name no more,
" Behold not only I but all this throng
" Fix their regards where thou hast veiled the sun."
On this I said, " If thou recall'st to mind
" What thou to me, what I to thee have been,
" Still will the present memory be sad.
" He turned me from that life, some two days back,
" He who before me goes, when round and full
" Shone in the heavens the Sister unto Him "
(I showed the sun). " Through the dark night of hell
" Where are the truly dead, he was my guide,
" Clothed in this real flesh now following him.

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" Thence by his aid I have been upwards borne,
" Scaling and making circuit of that mount
" Which makes you right, you whom the world made wrong;
" To bear me company, he says, till when
" I shall be there where Beatrice abides;
" Then it is fitting I be left alone;
" Virgil is he who speaketh to me thus,"
(I pointed him) " that other is the shade
" Through whom but now shook every rock and bank
" Of your domain, when purged from sin he rose."

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CANTO XXIV.

Foresè points out several spirits by name. Amongst others Buonagiunta of Lucca. The Poets come to a second tree like the former. From amidst its foliage a voice describes the sin of gluttony. The Poets encounter a glorious angel.

Our talk the pace, nor yet our pace the talk
Did check, but briskly speaking on we went,
Like a ship driven by a prosperous wind.
And now the ghosts, who seemed twice dead and wan,
Drew wonder through the caverns of their eyes
At sight of me, perceiving that I lived.
And I who ceased not from my talk, exclaimed,
" That shade, perhaps with slower pace ascends
" Than would have been, save for another's sake ;
" But if thou knowest where Piccarda dwells,
" Tell me, and say who there may be of note
" Among the throng who hold me under gaze?"
" My sister fair as good, and good as fair,
" Which she is most I know not, now enjoys
" In the high heavens the triumph of her crown."

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First saying this, he added, "And no law
"Forbids that each be named, we are so worn,
"And blurred in feature from our fasting here.
"Of Lucca, Buonagiunta then behold;"
(Pointing his finger) "and that other face
"Beyond him there, more than the others lean,
"Had in his keeping the most Holy Church;
"Of Tours he was, and purges by his fast
"Bolsena's eels, and the white wine of price."
He many others in succession showed,
And to be named they all quite willing seemed,
For I perceived no shade of discontent.
With hunger gnash, I saw the empty teeth
Of Ubaldino and of Boniface.
Whose pastoral staff o'er many nations reached.
I saw the Marquess who the leisure found
To swill at Forli, with less thirst than now,
And yet withal was still insatiate.
But like the man who looks and then prefers
One to the others, so did I to him
Of Lucca, for he seemed to know me best.
He muttered, and some word, Gentucca, came
Thick from the organ where he felt the woe
By which high justice stripped him bit by bit.
"Ah soul," I said, "whose yearning seems so great
"To speak with us, speak what I understand,
"And with thy words content thyself and me."

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" A maiden lives who bears not yet the veil ; "
He then began, " who shall my city make
" Thy pleasure, whosoe'er the man who blames.
" Forth shalt thou go with this my prophesy,
" And if my broken utterance error cause,
" To thee the coming facts will make it clear.
" But say if here I look upon the man
" Who first the rhymes conceived, beginning thus,
" ' *Ye dames who have the intelligence of love.*' "
I answered,—" I am one who when the breath
" Of love exhales, notes it, and in this wise,
" What the heart feels, that publish I abroad."
" Brother," he said, " I see even now the knot
" Which keeps the Notary Guitton and myself
" Far from that dulcet style I newly hear.
" I clearly see how plume your wings their flight
" Close after him who the inspiration gives ;
" In very truth it is not so with ours.
" And he who seeks by bolder flights to please,
" Between the dictions knows not to discern."
And, as if satisfied, he ceased to speak.
As birds which winter on the banks of Nile
Now spread themselves abroad in marshalled ranks,
Now with more swiftness fly in single file ;
So the whole people who were present there,
Turning their faces round, quickened their pace,
Light both from leanness and their holier wish :

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And like the man who wearying as he runs,
  Letteth his friends pass on, and gently walks
  Until the action of the heart be stilled;
So did Foresè let the holy throng
  Proceed, and following in my steps, he said—
  " When shall the time be that we meet again?"
" My life," I answered, " hath a term unknown;
  " But my return shall not so speedy prove
  " As I in wish shall to these shores attain;
" Because the place where I am doomed to live
  " From day to day still worse and worse becomes,
  " And to sad ruin seemeth self-impelled."
" Go to!" he said; " for he the chief in crime
  " I see before me at his horse's tail,
  " Dragged to that valley where no soul is cleansed;
" More swift at every step the horses fly,
  " Ever and ever, till the blow is struck
  " Which leaves the body in destruction vile.
" Short space those wheels eternal have to roll,"
  (He turned his eyes to heaven) " ere shall be plain
  " That which my words no further may declare.
" Now fare thee well! so precious is the time
  " In this our realm, that to advance with thee,
  " Pace for thy pace, too much of it I lose."
As when in full career oft dashes out
  One horseman from a troop of cavaliers,
  To gain the honour of a first assault,

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So did he part from us with widening stride,
And I was left with the two spirits there,
The mighty masters of the world of mind.
And when before us so by distance dwarfed
That to mine eyes his form uncertain grew,
As to my intellect his words had been,
Lo! I beheld, with branches full and quick,
Another apple tree, not distant far,
Because now seen beyond the mountain's curve.
Many I saw beneath it lift their hands
Crying I know not what unto the leaves,
Like helpless infants craving for a toy,
Who pray to one who will no answer give;
But who to whet and quicken the desire
Bears, unconcealed, aloft the object sought.
Then they withdrew all in their hope deceived,
And the great tree we neared just at the time
To tears and prayers inflexible it stood.
" Pass onwards, come not near it, pass ye by!
" High on the summit grows the tree of Eve;
" This plant is one which springeth from the same."
Thus from the branches spake I know not who,
So Virgil, Statius, and myself drew close,
And we passed round towards the sloping side.
" Recal to mind," it said, " those the accursed
" Formed in the clouds, and who, with surfeit rank,
" Both man and beast, dared Theseus in the fight;

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" Recal the Hebrews, whose too greedy thirst
" 'Twixt them and Gideon fellowship destroyed,
" When he descended upon Midian's plains."
So holding close by one edge of the two
We passed, our ears filled with the glutton's sins,
Which here receive their miserable gains.
Then as the road open and free became,
We onwards moved a thousand steps or more,
Each one in silence, contemplation full.
" Alone and drowned in thought, why go ye three?"
Sudden a voice exclaimed, at which I shook
As startled beasts trembling and filled with dread.
My head I turned the speaker to behold,
And never in blazing furnace was there seen
Metal or glass so glowing and so bright
As one I saw, who said—" If your desire
" Be to mount upwards, hither you must turn,
" For by this way he goes who goes to peace."
His aspect took from me the power of sight,
Therefore I turned towards my master wise,
Like one who sees not but by hearing walks.
And as she comes, sweet messenger of dawn,
The breeze of May, scattering her odours round,
All pregnant with the breath of herb and flower;
So was the breeze which o'er my forehead passed,
And full I felt the moving of the wing,
Which in ambrosial fragrance shewed itself.

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And thus I heard—" Blessed are they whom grace
" So lightens up, that love of appetite
" Inspires no darkness of impure desire,
" Craving alone the fitting and the true."

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CANTO XXV.

The Poets continue their ascent. Dante is full of doubts. Statius explains the generation of the human body and the infusion of the soul. They reach the seventh terrace. Spirits moving amidst mighty flames exalt the virtue of chastity.

The hour of the ascent brooked no delay,
For his meridian arc the sun had left
To Taurus, and to Scorpio the night.
So like a man who makes no halt but goes
Right in his way, not heeding what he sees,
If by the stimulus of want impelled;
We entered in by the receding rock,
One at a time, scaling the narrow stair
Which forced the climber to advance alone.
As the young stork which lifts its pinion up,
With wish to fly, yet daring not to leave
The parent nest, droppeth the failing wing,
Thus I myself, with burning wish to ask,
Was fearful still to act, so that my state
Was his whose lips prepare themselves to speak.

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He checked me not though rapid the ascent,
My father kind, but said—" Unloose the word
" Which thy bow stretches to the arrow's point."
And then my mouth I opened, free from fear—
" How can a spirit become lean," I asked,
" Where need of food to nourish there is none?"
" Hadst thou to memory Meleager brought,
" And how he perished as the brand consumed,
" This had not seemed to thee so strange a thing;
" And hadst thou thought how when the body moves
" Within the mirror, moves the image too,
" What now seems hard had very simple seemed.
" But that thy mind be tranquillised in this,
" Lo here is Statius! him I call and pray
" To be the healer of thy troubled thoughts."
" If I to him the eternal working shew,"
Statius made answer; " Where thy presence is,
" Exculpate me for I may not refuse."
He then went on, " If son, the words I speak
" Be taken and within thy mind preserved,
" To thee the light thou seekest shall be clear.
" The perfect blood which never is absorbed
" By the all-thirsty veins, but rests untouched,
" Like food unused men from the table lift,
" Takes in the heart the power to reproduce
" All members human, being in itself
" What through the veins is into those transformed.

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" There more refined it passeth down where speech
" Befitteth less than silence, then distils
" In Nature's vessel o'er another's blood ;
" One with the other mingling these combine,
" Passive the one, the other prone to act
" By the perfection whence it is derived.
" The junction formed, it carries on its work,
" First by coagulum, then maketh quick
" What it thus thickens for the work to do.
" The active virtue made a living thing
" Just as a plant, differing however thus,
" One is complete, the other incomplete,
" So worketh now, that it both moves and feels,
" Like a sea fungus, then begins to form
" The faculties, of which itself the seed ;
" And now contracts, oh son, and now expands
" That force which springeth from the parent heart,
" Where o'er all members nature holds control.
" But how the animal becometh man,
" Thou seëst not as yet, and 'tis the point
" Where one more wise than thou ere now hath erred ;
" For he in doctrine from the soul itself
" Disjoins the faculty to understand,
" Because he sees no organ for its play.
" Let thy heart open to the truth which comes,
" And know thou this, soon as the fœtus shews
" Organisation perfect of the brain,

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" The primal mover turns to it rejoiced
" At Nature's mighty art, and He inspires
" The new-formed soul with every power replete;
" This what it there finds active it attracts,
" And to its substance draws, making one soul,
" Which lives, and feels, and communes with itself.
" And that there seem less marvel in my words,
" Mark how the sun's heat turneth into wine,
" Joined to the juice which through the vine distils.
" And when to Lachesis the thread has failed,
" Loosed from the flesh, the soul by virtue takes
" And bears away both human and divine.
" The other faculties entirely mute,
" The memory, intelligence, and will,
" Remain in act, than ever, more intense.
" Making no halt, the soul itself descends,
" By power divine, to one of the two shores,
" And there at once knoweth the path to take.
" No sooner 'stablished in its new abode,
" The force potential circulates around,
" Here and as much as in the living limbs;
" And as the air with showery vapour charged,
" By the sun's rays refracted in itself,
" With colours rich and many is adorned;
" So the air ambient there is then resolved
" Into that form which is on it impressed
" By virtue of the soul which there abides;

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" And then in likeness to the little flame
" Which ever follows as the fire is moved,
" To its own spirit cleaveth the new form.
" And as the soul from this takes seeming shape,
" It is called shadow, and even to the sight
" Here may each organ sensible be found.
" Therefore it is we speak, it is we laugh,
" Therefore shed tears, and utter forth our sighs,
" As in the mountain thou hast learned to know.
" And just as the desires affect us here,
" And other passions, is the shadow moved;
" And of thy wonder thus the reason stands!"
Now being come to the last place of pain,
We to the right hand turned ourselves about
And gave attention to another care.
For here the bank an angry flame emits,
And blasts of wind rise from the outer edge
Repelling it and beating back the flame.
So we were forced to keep the open side,
And one by one; here 'twas the fire I feared,
And on the other hand I feared the fall.
My leader said to me—" See at this place
" Thine eyes thou keepest under close control,
" Because it would be easy here to err."
Summæ Deus clementiæ, from amidst
That mighty heat I heard in chant arise,
Which not the less made me incline to turn:

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And I saw spirits passing through the flame,
Wherefore I closely watched their steps and mine,
Turning from time to time my look to each.
When the last passage of the hymn was closed
They cried aloud, *Virum non cognosco,*
Then with low voice the hymn they recommenced ;
When closed, again they cried—" Lo, to the wood
" Diana fled, and Helice chased from thence,
" Whom Venus with her subtle poison smote."
Then they resumed their chant, and then the dames
They named aloud and husbands who were chaste,
Restrained by virtue and the marriage law.
And I believe this act alternate serves
For the whole space the fire of cleansing burns ;
And such the means, and such the sole repast
By which they cure the wound the last to close.

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CANTO XXVI.

On the seventh terrace the luxurious are punished. Dante encounters Guido Guinicelli of Bologna, and Daniel Arnault, a great Provengal poet.

Whilst by the margin thus, and one by one,
We onwards moved, my master often said—
"See by my warnings that thou profitest."
On my right shoulder struck the solar ray,
Which with its radiance all the western sky
Now changed to white from its celestial blue.
And with my shadow did I make the flame
More glowing seem, and at so sure a sign
I saw the spirits move with wondering thought.
This was the cause which waked in them desire
To speak of me, so their discourse began—
"A spirit's body this one doth not seem."
Then to make sure, as far as they had power,
They turned to me, ever with cautious care
Not to go forth where ceased the fire to burn.

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" Thou who advancest, not with steps more slow
" But haply reverent, in the other's train,
" Oh, answer me, who burn with thirst and fire ;
" Nor is thine answer sought by me alone,
" For all of these seek it with greater thirst
" Than cooling streams Ethiop or he of Ind.
" Tell how thou makest of thyself a wall
" To the sun's rays, as if thou hadst not yet
" Been caught and taken in the net of death."
On hearing this, I would have spoken out
Even on the instant, had not thought been fixed
On a new object which just then appeared ;
For in the middle of the burning path
Came many ghosts, facing the other troop,
By whom my whole attention was engrossed.
There and with haste from every side I saw
These shades advance, and they each other kissed
Not lingering, with a short embrace content.
So in the dusky squadrons we may see
Ants with their feelers one another touch,
Perhaps their path to know or luck to learn.
Soon as the friendly interchange was past,
Scarcely had either made a step away
When they all strove which should the loudest cry ;
" Sodoma and Gomorrah," shouted these ;
And those—" Into the cow Pasiphaë went,
" The bull enticing to the genial act."

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Then like the cranes which in two squadrons seek
The northern mountains and the southern sands,
Some the great ice to shun, and some the sun;
One troop of spirits went, the other came,
And to their first chants weeping they returned,
And to the cry which suited each the best.
And they again approached me as before,
Those, the same spirits who had prayed my speech,
Anxious to hear me as their manner shewed.
I who had twice their strong desire perceived,
Began to speak—" Oh, souls secure to find,
" Whene'er the good time comes, the state of peace,
" Neither in youth nor ripeness are my limbs
" Left in the world beyond, but they are here
" In blood with me and joints articulate.
" Up here I come no longer to be blind;
" She is above by whom the grace is mine
" This mortal vestment through your world to bring.
" But—and I pray your holier wish may rest
" In quick fulfilment, and your home be heaven,
" Full of all love and by no limits bound,
" So that you tell that which my pen may write!—
" Who, who are ye, and what may be the crowd
" Which in your rear is moving now away?"
Not with more stupid wonderment perplexed
The mountaineer in gazing silence stands
When rough and savage to the town he comes,

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Than every spirit in appearance shewed.
But from this stupor when at length relieved,
And such soon ceases in a noble heart,
He who first questioned me then recommenced—
" Blessed be thou who freightest from our shores
" The sweet experience how thy life to mend ;
" Those who come not with us sinned with the sin
" For which already Cæsar in the hour
" Of triumph heard his soldiers call him queen ;
" Wherefore they leave us, Sodom on their lips,
" In self-reproach, as thou but now hast heard,
" And make the fire more pungent by their shame.
" For us, Hermaphrodite our sin is called ;
" But since we hold not to the law of men,
" Following our brutal appetites like beasts,
" To our dishonour we must shout aloud,
" As we take leave of them, the name of her
" Who became beast in a beast's outward shape.
" Thou knowest now our acts, and what our guilt ;
" If 'tis thy wish perchance our names to know,
" Time there is not, nor could I tell them all ;
" But for myself, I set thy wish at rest :
" I Guido Guinicelli here am cleansed
" Because true penitent before I died."
As her two sons, the hour Lycurgus grieved,
Impetuous rushed their mother to receive,
So with myself, but not to such degree,

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When his own name I heard him tell, who was
Father to me and to the nobler band
Who ever sang of sweet and gracious love.
Hearing and speaking not, I pensive went
Long time, observing him with earnest gaze,
And nearer had I come but for the fire.
When I had fed with gazing my delight,
Myself I wholly to his service gave,
With words which bore in them the stamp of truth.
And then he said—" Thou givest me such proof
" Of love in what I hear, it is most true
" Lethe may not destroy them nor obscure ;
" But if thy words thus bear the truthful ring,
" Tell me the reason of so great a show
" Of word and look that I to thee am dear."
I answered him—" Thy verses are so sweet,
" That whilst the modern tongue shall hold its sway,
" The very ink which writes them shall be prized."
" Brother," he said, " he whom my finger points"
(He pointed to a spirit then in front),
" Was better artist in the mother tongue.
" His chants of love and epics of romance
" Surpassed all others, though the foolish say
" He of Limoges singeth the sweeter strain.
" These more to fame than truth their faces turn,
" And thus their own opinions form and fix
" Before they learn from reason and from art.

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" Thus of Guittone many spake of old
" With blind applause, him only giving praise,
" Till better writers vindicated truth.
" But if the mighty privilege be thine
" To enter freely to the cloister blessed,
" Where Christ is head in council of the elect,
" Do thou for me a Paternoster say,
" Such as may suit the world in which we are,
" Where we no longer have the power to sin."
Then, and perhaps to yield to him the place
Who next him stood, he vanished in the fire,
As a fish plunges to the watery depths.
To whom he pointed somewhat close I drew,
And said that for his name my willing heart
Prepared indeed a very gracious place.
Then very freely he began to say—
" So pleasing is and courteous thy request,
" I never can nor wish from thee to hide.
" I am Arnault who weeps and chanting goes ;
" Sad I behold the folly of the past,
" And see with joy the happiness to come.
" And now I pray you by that power sublime
" Which leads you upward without heat or cold,
" That you at times remember my great grief."
And then he hid in the refining fire.

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CANTO XXVII.

The Poets are told by an angel that they must pass through the flames. Dante is fearful and irresolute. At the name of Beatrice he takes courage. He sleeps and has a vision. He reaches the terrestrial Paradise. The duty of Virgil is now fulfilled, and Dante is free to act for himself.

As when his rays first vibrate o'er the spot
  Where our Great Maker shed for us His blood;
  Libra in zenith height o'er Ebro's flood,
And on the Ganges full meridian glow;
  So stood the sun; day then was waning fast
  When God's good angel lightened on our eyes.
Beyond the flame he stood, upon the edge;
  Beati mundo corde, was his song,
  In notes more clear and full than voice of man.
"There is no passage till ye taste the fire;
  "Ye holy spirits, enter then the flame,
  "And to the song there chanted be not deaf."
So spake the angel near to whom we stood,
  And lo! when I had heard him I became
  Like unto one who lieth in the grave.

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With fingers interlaced I raised my hands,
The fire beholding, and to fancy wild
Came the charred corpses erewhile I had seen.
Towards me then my kindly escort turned,
And Virgil speaking said to me—"My son,
" Here may be pain and suffering, but not death.
" Recall, recall to mind, and think if I
" Could guide thee safely upon Geryon's back,
" What shall I not do nearer now to God?
" Hold this for certain truth, if in the heart
" Of this great flame thou wert a thousand years,
" It could not make thee bald even of a hair;
" And if perchance thou judgest I deceive,
" Draw near to it, seek thou the proof thyself,
" With thy two hands upon thy vestment's edge;
" For once and ever cast all dread aside,
" And hither turn thyself and fearless come."
And still, though conscience-pricked, I was unmoved.
When thus he saw me obstinate and hard,
Somewhat disturbed he said—"See now, my son,
" There stands this wall 'twixt Beatrice and thee."
As Thisbe's name once more unclosed the eye
Of dying Pyramus, on her to gaze,
That hour the mulberry vermilion grew;
So all my hardness melted quite away.
To my wise chief I turned, hearing the name
Which is a living spring within my heart;

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On this he shook his head, exclaiming—"How!
"Shall we still stand without?" and then he smiled,
As at a child an apple hath subdued.
Before me then he passed into the fire,
Requesting Statius that he come behind,
For he had kept us much apart till then.
When once within, even into boiling glass
I could have cast myself for coolness sake,
For here so very mighty was the heat.
My gentle father sought to give me cheer,
Ever of Beatrice speaking as we went,
Saying—"Methinks even now I see her eyes."
A voice was guide to us which from beyond
Chanted, and we in close attention fixed,
Came forth where rose the first step of ascent.
Venite, benedicti patris mei,
Sounded within a light which lightened there
So brightly, I might not with safety look.
"The sun is low," it added, "evening comes;
"Make no delay, quicken your flagging steps,
"Whilst yet the west is not in blackness bound."
Straight rose the upward path, and through the rock
In such direction that I blocked the rays
In front of me, for now the sun was low.
We yet had mounted only some small way
When by the failing shadow we perceived,
My sages and myself, the sun was set.

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And ere in all parts of its vast expanse
The whole horizon's face one aspect bore,
And ere the night was everywhere abroad,
Each of us made a step his resting place,
For from the nature of the mount we lost
The power to move, though pleasure kept the wish.
As when in gentle rumination stand
The goats, so lately on the rocky peaks
Wayward and wild, before their feeding time;
Hushed in the shade they rest while the sun glows,
Watched by the goatherd, who upon his staff
Leaneth, and leaning, holds them under charge;
And as the shepherd who in open air
Beside his flock passeth his quiet night,
Watching that no wild beast scatter the sheep;
So at that hour were we, and all the three,
They like the shepherds, and I like the goat,
Hemmed in on either side by the hard cliff.
Little of outer things might there be seen,
But in that little I could see the stars
More bright in sheen and larger than their wont.
So thinking and so gazing upon these
Sleep overtook me, sleep which oftentimes,
Ere it be yet complete, new things discerns;
Methought that at the hour when from the East
First on this mountain Cytherea shone,
Which with the fire of love seems ever warm,

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In dream appeared to me, and young and fair,
A female form, which wandering o'er a plain
Plucking the flowers, whilst she was singing, said—
" Know everyone who would my name inquire,
" That I am Leah, and I ever go
" Making a garland with my beauteous hands;
" To please me at my glass I deck myself:
" But at her mirror, never drawing back,
" My sister Rachel sitteth all day long.
" She with her sweet eyes loveth to behold,
" As with my hands I love myself to deck;
" She is content to see, and I to work."
And now the splendours which precede the dawn,
And rise so grateful to the pilgrim's heart
When homeward bound, home is approaching near,
Scattered on every side the darkness deep,
And my dream with it, wherefore I arose,
For my great masters had already risen.
" That pleasant apple which on every branch
" Mortals are seeking with such anxious care,
" Will bring to-day peace to thy hungry soul."
Such were the words which fell from Virgil's lips
Upon mine ears, and never was there gift
Which in its sweetness might with them compare.
So mighty then became in me the wish
To reach the summit, every step I took
Seemed to enlarge the feathers of my wings.

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When the whole steep ascent beneath us lay,
And when upon the highest point we stood,
Then upon me did Virgil fix his eyes,
And said—" Both temporal and eternal fire
" Thou now hast seen, my son, and thou art come
" Where my own faculties no further reach.
" With art and knowledge I have brought thee here ;
" Take now thine own good pleasure for a guide.
" Past is the steepness, the strait places wide ;
" Behold the sun which on thy forehead glows,
" Behold the herb, the flowers, the little shrubs,
" Which from this earth spring up and need no seed.
" Till the glad eyes and beautiful approach
" Which weeping made me to thy succour haste,
" Here thou may'st sit, or amidst these may go ;
" Look not to hear me more, look for no sign ;
" Free, right, and healthy is thy power of choice,
" Thou wouldst do wrong its promptings to mistrust.
" Therefore on thee I place mitre and crown."

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CANTO XXVIII.

The Poet gives an exquisite description of the beauties of the terrestrial Paradise. A lady of marvellous beauty appears on the bank of a clear stream. She solves the doubts of Dante and describes the nature of the place in which he now is.

Now longing much to search within and round
The sacred forest dense and fresh with life,
Which tempered to mine eyes the early day;
Making no further pause, I left the bank,
Taking the plain, slow stepping o'er a soil
From every part of which sweet odours rose.
A gentle air which had not in itself
Nature of change, upon my forehead struck,
But with no rougher force than a soft breeze,
By which the branches gladly tremulous
Were all inclined towards that side on which
The holy mountain threw its earliest shade;
Yet not so swerving from their upright growth,
That on the summits still the little birds
Might not pour forth their music undisturbed;

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There with full gladness singing the young hours
These breathe the gentle air among the leaves,
Which stir in murmur to their harmony;
Such murmur as discoursed from branch to branch
Of the pine forest on Chiassi's shore
When Æolus lets the sirocco loose.
With lingering steps I now had made my way
Into the ancient wood, so far within,
I ceased to see where I had entrance made;
And lo! a rivulet my passage barred
Which on the left side with its little waves
Bent down the herb which issued from its banks.
All waters, the most limpid upon earth,
Had seemed to have some mixture in themselves,
Compared with this which nothing hid beneath;
Although in utter darkness it flowed on
Under perpetual shade, for neither sun
Nor moon had here the power to shed a ray.
I checked my step, and with mine eyes I passed
O'er and beyond the rivulet, to note
The rich diversity of tree and shrub;
And lo! appeared to me—just as appears
Some sudden thing which turns at once aside
With its own marvel every other thought—
A lady, all alone, who moved along
Singing and plucking flowers from the rich store
Of flowers which painted all the path she trod.

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" Ah lady in whose beauty shines the light
" Of love, if I may credence give to looks
" Wont to be deemed the index of the heart ;
" May thy sweet pleasure be to turn thy step,"
I said to her—" towards this little stream,
" So that the song thou singest I may hear.
" Thou bring'st the place to memory, and how fair
" Was Proserpine, that hour on which were lost
" She to her mother, to herself the spring."
As with a gliding step the maiden moves,
Her feet entwined when turning in the dance,
And scarce one foot before the other puts ;
So o'er the yellow and vermilion flowers
She turned towards me, and her bearing was
A virgin's who casts down her modest eyes.
And as she near me came, to all my wish
She brought fulfilment, for her dulcet song
With its whole wealth of meaning reached mine ears.
Soon as she was where flower and herb were bathed
By the clear water of the pleasant stream,
With honour great to me she raised her eyes.
I do not think a light so radiant shone
From underneath the lids of Venus' orbs,
When by her son, against all wont, transfixed.
She from the other and right margin smiled,
And in her hands entwined were lovelier flowers
Than this high region shows which needs no seed.

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The river placed between us paces three,
But not the Hellespont where Xerxes crossed,
(Still the great bridle to the pride of man,)
Was more Leander's hate, because its waves
Wild between Sestos and Abydos rolled,
Than this to me, for it no passage gave.
" Ye are fresh come, and it may chance my smile,"
So she began—" in this the chosen place
" For human nature made to be the nest,
" May cause some wonder, some suspicion too;
" But the Psalm *Delectasti* bringeth light
" To clear the clouds of your intelligence.
" And thou before me, thou who prayedst me first,
" Willest thou more to hear, lo I am come
" To answer readily thy every wish."
I said—" The water and the forest's sound
" Within me negative the new belief
" In things I lately heard counter to this."
She answered me—" The manner I will tell
" And reason why thy wonder is aroused,
" And clear away the mist which clouds thy mind.
" The good Supreme, whose bliss is in Himself,
" Made man for goodness fit, and this abode
" Gave him in earnest of eternal peace.
" By his own fault his sojourn here was brief;
" By his own fault for weeping and for pain
" He harmless mirth and simple joys exchanged.

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" That those disorders which beneath it spring
" From exhalations watery, or of earth,
" Which as they are indued return to heat,
" Might not to man bring elemental war,
" This mount shoots up thus high towards the heavens,
" And is strife-free up from the entrance gate.
" Now since in circulation every where
" The air in primal motion rolleth on,
" If its gyrations broken by no shock ;
" In this high region, which is wholly free
" In the pure air, such primal movement strikes,
" And makes the wood from its thick foliage sound ;
" And the struck plant, so far as given the power,
" With its own procreant virtue loads the air,
" And this then circling scatters it abroad.
" The other land, as in its nature fit
" Or by its clime, conceives and bringeth forth
" Trees diverse, and with diverse virtue rich.
" Therefore the marvel should no longer hold,
" If this I say be heard, when any plant
" Without seed visible there taketh root.
" And this thou ought'st to know, the holy plain
" On which thou treads't is full of every germ,
" And beareth fruit not gathered on the earth.
" The water which thou seëst hath not source
" In vapour ever new by cold condensed,
" Like streams now swollen, now of water scant,

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" But from a never failing, changeless fount,
" Which by the will of God so much receives
" As is discharged by those two running streams.
" One upon this side flowing down with power
" Takes from the memory the sense of sin,
" The other stream brings back the sense of good
" Hence this is Lethe, on the other side
" That Eunoë is called, which worketh not
" Unless the former first, and both be drank.
" This water in its taste all else excels,
" And though thy thirst ought to be satisfied,
" Even did it please me nothing more to tell ;
" Still shall my grace this corollary add ;
" Thou wilt not hold, I think, my words less dear
" If of my promise I enlarge the bounds.
" Those who in times long past in verse described
" The age of gold, and all its happy state,
" Perhaps this region in Parnassus dreamt.
" Here dwelt in innocence the primal pair ;
" Here it is always spring, with every fruit ;
" This the true nectar is by poets sung."
On this I turned around to where behind
My poets stood, and saw that with a smile
They had the closing utterances heard ;
Then to the beauteous dame I looked again.

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CANTO XXIX.

Dante follows in the footsteps of the lady. She directs him to fix his attention on what he is about to see. A sudden brightness illuminates the whole forest. Sweet harmonies are heard. A marvellous and divine mystery is witnessed.

Singing like one filled with the breath of love,
She added this to her concluding words;
Beati, quorum tecta sunt peccata.
And as the nymphs disport themselves unseen
Among the forest glades, some with desire
The sun to shun, some to behold his strength;
So she moved up the stream, taking her way
Along the bank, and I with pace alike,
Her short steps followed with my shortened steps.
We had not each some fifty footsteps made,
When the two banks at the same angle turned,
So that once more I moved towards the east;
Nor had we far in this direction gone,
When wholly round to me the lady bent,
Saying—"My brother, look thou now and list?"

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And lo a brightness suddenly brake forth
From every part of the great forest's breadth;
I for a moment thought the lightning flashed.
But as the lightning cometh and is gone,
And this grew brighter as it longer stayed;
In thought I said, "What is this wondrous sight?"
And a delicious melody ran through
The luminous æther, whence a virtuous zeal
Made me reproach the arrogance of Eve,
Who when the earth and heavens obedience gave,
Sole woman and created only then,
Would not that knowledge should have any veil;
But beneath which had she submissive bent,
I those ineffable delights had felt
Even at my birth, and held them until now.
Whilst passing through, with my whole soul engrossed,
Those blessed foretastes of the eternal joy,
And eager still for greater joys to come,
Before us as it were a flame of fire
Lit up the air beneath the verdant boughs,
And the sweet sounds we heard became a song.
"Oh ye most holy virgins! if the pains
"Of hunger, vigil, cold, for you endured,
"Give me a claim to call on you for help,
"Vouchsafe that Helicon for me may flow,
"And that Urania aid me with her choir,
"To think of things sublime and give them voice."

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Seven trees of gold some little way beyond
Deceived the eye through the long tract of air,
Which still lay interposed 'twixt them and us;
But when I came so near to them that forms
They held in common, and which sense deceive,
Lost not by distance the distinctive type,
That faculty which gives the reason play,
Taught us that these were candlesticks we saw;
And made us hear "Hosanna" in the song.
High up the beautiful appearance glowed
Brighter by far than the moon's fairest light
At time of midnight in her middle month.
I turned around with admiration full
To the good Virgil, and his answer was
A face not less by wonderment impressed.
I then returned my look to those high things
Which with so slow a movement tow'rds us came
A new wed couple had made better speed!
"Why dost thou," spake the lady in rebuke,
"Fix thy whole soul upon those living lights,
"And tak'st no note of that which after comes?"
As men their leaders, many then I saw
Follow those lights, and they were clothed in white,
Never such whiteness saw the world of man!
In glittering glow the water on my left
Gave my left side in full reflection back,
If as a mirror I observed therein;

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When on my own bank in such manner placed
That the stream's breadth alone the distance made,
To gain a clearer view, I stayed my steps.
I saw these little flames move forward all,
Leaving the air behind them rich in hue,
And having semblance as of pencil strokes ;
So that above, a severance there seemed
Into seven bands of light, all of the tints
Of the sun's bow or halo of the moon.
These floating streamers had a further sweep
Than eye could reach, and if I rightly judged,
'Twixt the two outer ones were paces ten.
Under so fair a sky as I describe
Were four and twenty elders, and they came
In order two by two, with lilies crowned.
They all in concert chanted—" Blessed be thou
" Of Adam's daughters, and the blessing rest
" Upon thy beauty through eternity ! "
When flower and other fresh and tender herb,
Over against me on the other bank,
Were trod no longer by the Elected band ;
As in the heavens star still succeedeth star,
So after those four beasts successive passed,
And each of them was crowned with verdant leaves.
They all were winged, and their wings were six,
And these were full of eyes ; and Argus' eyes,
Had they been living, like to them had been.

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To paint their shape no further verse I spare,
For other matter, Reader, holds me bound,
So great, I may not upon those enlarge.
But read Ezekiel who depicteth them
As he beheld them from the frigid north
Come with the cloud, the hurricane and fire.
And in his writing as they may be read,
So were they here, except that in the wings
St. John, and I with him a difference find.
Upon the space contained between the four
Was a triumphal and a two-wheeled car,
Yoked to a Gryphon's neck which dragged it on.
The one and other wing it bore aloft,
Twixt the mid band of light and three and three,
So that each one of these uninjured stretched.
So high the wings that they were lost to sight;
Golden the members were in the bird's form;
The rest were white and with vermilion mixed.
Never by car so beautiful was Rome
Made glad in Scipio's or the Cæsar's day;
For even the Sun's had been by contrast poor;
That car which straying from its path, was burnt
When by her prayers the suppliant Tellus made
Jove in the secret of his counsel just.
By the right wheel three damsels in a ring
Came onward dancing, one so red of hue
She was scarce visible amidst the fire;

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Another was as if the flesh and bone
Had of the purest emerald been made;
The third was white as newly drifted snow.
And now the white appeared to lead the dance,
And now the red, and as the leader sang,
So were the other's movements quick or slow.
At the left wheel the festive band were four,
In purple clad, and the three others moved
As the fourth led, who was three-eyed in face.
After the train mysterious thus described
I saw two aged men, not clothed alike,
But like in bearing, which was high and grave.
In aspect one of them looked of the school
Of great Hippocrates, whom Nature made
For those she holds most dear of living things.
The other's zeal seemed different in its kind,
He held a glittering and sharp edgèd sword,
Which made me tremble even on the further bank.
Then humble in appearance four I saw,
And behind all an aged man alone,
Who sleeping came and yet of aspect keen.
And the whole seven were as the larger band
In a like manner clad, except their heads,
Round which the lilies made no sylvan wreath,
The rose instead and other crimson flowers;
A little further off, one might have sworn
That all were burning from the eyebrows up.

And when right facing me the chariot came,
A shout was heard, and all that holy band
Further to make advance forbidden seemed,
For with the golden ensigns there they paused.

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CANTO XXX.

Beatrice appears surrounded by angelic forms. Virgil disappears. Dante weeps. Beatrice turns towards him severe in manner and her words full of bitter accusation. The angels are full of pity. Beatrice still speaks the words of rebuke.

When the north Wain of the primeval sky,
Which never setting never rising knew,
Nor other clouding save the veil of sin,
And here made each one eager in the path
Of his own duty, as the lower star
Directs the helm which guides the ship to port,
Had come to rest; then the truth-fearing band,
Which first between it and the Gryphon came,
Turned to the chariot as their home of peace.
And one of them, as if sent forth by heaven,
And chanting *Veni Sponsa de Libano,*
Thrice cried the words, and all took up the cry.
As shall the blest at the last trumpet's call
Each from his sepulchre prepare to rise
With Hallelujah on his re-clothed lips,

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So to bear high the holy litter up,
Ad vocem tanti senis, there arose
A hundred angel messengers of life.
These all *Qui venis Benedictus* said,
And strewing flowers over, and all around,
Manibus o date lilia plenis.
And now I saw as the new day began
The eastern sky with rosy cloudlets rich,
The rest most beautiful with light serene;
And the sun's rising disc so shadow-veiled
By the soft vapours tempering its ray,
The eye could bear a long and steady look.
Thus to my vision in a cloud of flowers,
Which by angelic hands were scattered forth,
And fell around the litter and within,
Wearing a snow-white veil, with olive wreathed
And mantle green, a woman's form appeared,
Clad with the colour of the living flame.
And now my spirit, though so long a time
Had passed away since when her presence caused
A trembling wonder to possess my frame,
Without the further knowledge of the eye,
But by a force occult which from her flowed,
Of the old love felt all the mighty power.
No sooner at the appearance was I struck
By the old influence which had me transfixed
Even in the days my boyhood still was mine,

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Than to the left I turned, full of that trust
With which an infant to its mother runs
When it hath fear or is in some distress,
To say to Virgil—" Not one drop of blood
" Which in my body flows but trembles now ;
" I know the symptoms of the ancient fire ;"
But Virgil had deprived us of himself,
Virgil the tender father of my soul,
Virgil to whom I gave myself in trust !
Not all the joys by our first mother lost
Could now have checked on cheeks tearless till then
That weeping which had turned them all to gloom.
" Because thy Virgil his departure takes,
" Cease from thy weeping, Dante, weep no more ;
" Now must thy tears fall for another wound."
Like to the Admiral who on poop or prow
Placeth himself to note the crews which work
The other ships, and cheers them to do well ;
So on the bank and on the chariot's left,
When I turned round at mention of my name
(Which of necessity I mention here),
I saw the form, I had already seen
Under the festal flowers angelic veiled,
Towards me look from the stream's other shore.
Although the veil which floated from her head,
And which was circled with Minerva's leaves,
Permitted her to be but faintly seen ;

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With gesture haughty and imperial air,
She thus discoursed, like one who when he speaks
Reserves the harshest words to close his speech.
"Look well, for Beatrice I am, I am!
"How hast thou merited to reach the mount?
"Didst thou not know that man is happy here?"
Mine eyes cast down fell on the crystal wave,
And when I saw myself they sought the ground,
So great the shame upon my forehead stamped.
As to a child a mother seems severe,
So she appeared to me, because I felt
With her stern pity there was bitter mixed.
She silent was, and then the angel's hymn
Forthwith arose *In te Domine speravi*,
But beyond *Pedes meos* sang they not.
As snow amidst the pine wood's living logs
On the back ridge of Italy congeals,
Drifted and solid by Sclavonian blasts,
Then melting drains through its own icy mass,
When breathes the region where no shade is found;
Just as the candle melteth in the fire;
So could I weep not, sigh not, till I heard
The song of those who ever tune their notes
By the sweet music of the eternal spheres.
But after hearing their soft harmony,
Which spoke compassion more than if their words
Had said—"Why load him with such deep reproach?"

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The ice which had around my heart congealed
Water and sighs became, and with great pain
Through mouth and eyes passed from my labouring breast.
Still on the chariot's left she stood in look
Unmoved, then tow'rds the pitying angels turned,
And in the words which follow thus she spake—
" Ye keep your vigils through eternal day,
" So that no night, no sleep from you can hide
" Whatever passes in the whirl of time ;
" Therefore my answer is with greater care,
" That he may understand who yonder weeps,
" That sin and sorrow must proportion hold.
" Not by the influence of the heavens alone,
" Which every germ to some fixed end directs,
" As may be ruled by its companion star,
" But by the bounty of the grace divine,
" Which in such lofty vapours hath its rain,
" No mortal vision can to them approach,
" This man was fashioned so in early life
" With innate virtue, that each happy gift
" Should have brought forth in him its wondrous fruit.
" But wilder and more foul becomes the soil,
" If the bad seed be sown, and land untilled,
" The more its richness is by nature rank.
" Him for a time my countenance upheld,
" And shewing him the light of my young eyes ;
" He turned to tread with me the path of truth.

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" No sooner did I on the threshold stand
" Of the new life, when earth for heaven was changed,
" His heart once mine he then to others gave.
" When I had risen to spirit from the flesh,
" More rich in virtue and in loveliness,
" He held me less in honour and less dear.
" He turned his footsteps into evil paths,
" And followed those false images of good
" Which keep no promise they may seem to give.
" Vainly those holy breathings I besought
" Which speak in sleep, in dreams, in other ways,
" To call him back; little he heeded these:
" So deep his fall, no remedies nor means
" Had power to bring deliverance to his soul
" Save this—to shew him the lost souls of Hell.
" Wherefore I sought the portal of the dead,
" And to that spirit who hath brought him here
" My prayers with heavy weeping were addressed.
" It were to violate God's high decree
" Were Lethe to be passed, and such a feast
" Be his to taste without some payment made
" In a repentance of abounding tears."

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CANTO XXXI.

Beatrice still continues to rebuke Dante. He confesses his transgressions. He is plunged by Matilda in the waters of Lethe. Beatrice removes her veil. Rapture of Dante on beholding her divine beauty.

" Oh thou who art beyond the sacred stream ;"
Directing now towards myself the words
Which even when indirect so biting seemed,
She recommenced, continuing without pause ;
" Say, say, if this be true ; so great a charge
" Demands that thy confession be subjoined."
So deeply was my inner sense confused,
That my voice stirred, but in the throat was quenched
Ere from its natural organs it was free.
Pausing a moment,—" Tell thy thought," she said ;
" Give answer, for thy bitter memories
" Are by this water all uncancelled yet."
A mingling of confusion and of fear
Forced from my lips a yes so faint and low,
The eyes were needed to complete the souud.

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As the bow breaketh when the shaft is loosed
From too great tension of the cord and arc,
And with less speed the arrow finds its aim;
So did I break beneath this heavy charge,
Forth gushed the scalding tears and choking sighs,
And my voice died upon my opening lips.
And then she said—"Amidst thy heart's desires,
" Which led thee onwards to the love of good,
" (And nothing out of this deserves a wish)!
" What obstacles, what pits across thy path
" Didst thou encounter that thy further course
" Thou thus hast chosen to deprive of hope?
" What profit, what attractions, or what gain
" Could the survey of other things present
" To give them power to make of thee their slave?"
After the heaving of a bitter sigh,
With scarce a voice to utter my response,
And lips which scarce had power to give it shape,
I weeping said—"Things of the present life
" With their false pleasures turned my steps aside
" Soon as thy face was hidden from my sight."
" Hadst thou been silent, or hadst thou denied
" What thou," she said, "hast now confessed, not less
" To the great Judge of all thy sin were known;
" But when there breaketh from the sinner's mouth
" Confession of his sin, in our high court
" The sword of wrath divine then loses edge.

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" However, that thou bear more fruitful shame
" For thy transgressions, and another time
" May be more bold to face the siren's wiles,
" Lay down the causes of thy tears, and list
" If thou would'st know how to a better part
" My buried body should have been thy guide.
" Never did art or nature joined present
" Pleasure to thee as the fair limbs which once
" Enclosed myself, now dust to dust returned.
" And if thy crowning joy to thee was lost
" When death had made me his, what thing of earth
" Ought to have turned to it thy heart's desire?
" This had thy duty been at the first blow,
" Which told of perishing things, to lift thy soul
" High after me whom these no longer touch;
" Not to weigh down thy pinions to the ground,
" To risk new blows, or from some trifling girl
" Or other joy which in the using fades.
" Some twice or thrice the young bird courts the snare,
" But when the bird in plumage is complete,
" In vain the net is spread, the arrow flies."
As children at the moment of disgrace
Are mute, and listening stand with downcast eye,
In penitence acknowledging their fault,
So did I stand; and then she said—" Since thou
" Hast sorrow at my words, raise up thy beard.
" Thou wilt have double sorrow at the sight."

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With less resistance than the solid oak
Uprooted either by our northern blast
Or that which bloweth in the Moorish land,
Did I, at her command, lift up my head,
And when the eyes sought from the beard to learn,
Then well I knew the poison in her words;
And as my face survey more open took,
Then why the primal creatures had forborne
To scatter forth their flowers I understood;
And mine eyes timid and uncertain still,
Saw Beatrice towards the Gryphon turn,
Which in one body had two natures joined.
Though veiled, and though beyond the verdant stream,
She seemed in beauty to surpass herself
More than on earth all others she surpassed.
The nettle of contrition stung me so,
That of all other things what held me turned
Most to itself, was most to me in hate.
So great was the remorse which filled my heart,
That stunned I fell, and how I then became,
She knoweth well who gave to me the cause.
And when the heart my outward sense revived,
Her I beheld whom I had found alone,
Above me, and she said—"Hold, hold me fast!"
She plunged me in the river to the throat,
And drawing me behind her floated on,
Light in the water as a shuttle flies.

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As we approached nigh to the blessed shore,
Asperges me I heard so sweetly sung,
It fails my memory and description mocks.
The lady beautiful threw wide her arms,
Embraced my head, and plunged me in the stream,
Where I might surely of the water drink;
Then drew me forth, presenting me thus bathed
Within the dance of the four maidens fair,
And each of these covered me with her arm.
" Here we are nymphs and we are stars in heaven;
" Ere Beatrice descended to the earth,
" To be her handmaids we had been ordained.
" To her we lead thee; but to see the light
" Of gladness in her eyes, thine must be cleared
" By the three yonder who more deeply judge."
Thus they began their song, and afterwards
They led me with them to the Gryphon's breast,
Where Beatrice with face towards us stood.
" Look, now," they said; " with gazing fill thy soul;
" We now have placed thee before emeralds,
" Whence love to wound thee once his armour drew."
Warmer than flame, a thousand fond desires
Mine eyes did rivet on her lustrous eyes,
Which o'er the Gryphon looked unmoved and fixed.
Just as the sun is mirrored in the glass,
In them the two-fold shape irradiate shone
In its two natures, with the acts of each.

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Picture, oh reader, how my wonder grew
When I beheld the shape itself unmoved,
And in its image saw it vary thus.
While marvelling much, and in its gladness full
My soul was tasting of that blessed food,
Which, while it satisfies, excites desire;
Proving themselves of heaven's high order sprung
In every movement, came the other three,
Moving in rhythm to the angelic chant.
" Turn, turn, oh Beatrice, thy holy eyes,"
Such was their song, " unto thy faithful friend,
" Who for the sight of thee such journey made.
" We pray thee do to us the grace: unveil
" Thy face to him that he may contemplate
" The new and richer beauty now concealed."
Oh, living splendour of eternal light,
Who ever pallid grew beneath the shade,
Or of the fountain of Parnassus drunk,
Who had not felt his mind obscured and dull
In the attempt to paint thee as thou wert
When veiled by heavenly harmonies alone,
Thou to the ambient air thyself disclosed?

CANTO XXXII.

Dante beholds wonderful and mysterious objects. He hears sweet music, and under its influence sleep overcomes him. On awakening he sees other wonderful mysteries.

So fixed and earnestly mine eyes were set
To quench the craving of my ten years' thirst,
That for the time all other sense was dead;
And hindrances on every side they found
Aught else to see, so strong the heavenly smile
With the old charm drew them towards itself.
When round I bent, with most unwilling act,
Towards my left, towards the holy three,
Because I heard one utter—"Too intent!"
And that defect of vision which the eye
Hath when just stricken by the vivid sun,
Made me awhile incapable of sight.
But as my sight returned to lesser things,
(Lesser contrasted with the glorious light
From which reluctant I had turned away)

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I saw upon my right winding about
The glorious army, and it onwards swept
Having the sun and seven lights full in front.
As under shields uplifted for defence
A troop retire, and by the standard wheel
Ere the whole body be in motion placed;
So this militia of the heavenly realm,
Whose place was in the van, all onward pressed,
Ere there was movement in the chariot's pole.
Then to the wheels the virgin band returned;
And its most blessed load the Gryphon moved,
But so that not one feather was disturbed.
She who had urged my passage o'er the stream
With Statius and myself followed the wheel,
Which in revolving made the smaller arc;
And traversing the crowning wood, all void
Through her who yielded to the serpent's guile,
Angelic harmony controlled our steps.
We had advanced a space perhaps so great
As might be measured by three arrow flights,
When from the chariot Beatrice came down.
"Adam"—I heard from all in murmur drop,
And then they moved in circle round a tree
Despoiled and flowerless in its every branch.
Its naked form which wide and wider spread
As it rose upward, even the tribes of Ind
In their own woods had for a marvel held.

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" Blessed be thou, oh Gryphon, that thy beak
" Hath not that tree despoiled, sweet to the taste,
" But from which sweetness cometh anguish dread!"
So moving all around the mighty plant
The others cried; and the two-natured shape,
" Thus is the seed of righteousness preserved!"
Then turning round it grasped the chariot's pole
And drew it to the foot of the bare tree,
And that which came from it to it was bound.
As plants upon the earth, when poureth down
The sun's effulgence mingled with the light
Which radiates from behind the Fishes' sign,
Swell into bud, and then each one renews
Its own specific colour, ere the sun
His coursers yokes under another star;
So less than roses, more than violets rich,
With freshening colour was the tree restored,
Whose branches were so lately spoiled and bare.
I never heard—no such on earth is sung—
Such hymn as that now chanted by the band,
Nor was I conscious of it to its close.
Could I describe how gathering slumber sealed
The pitiless eyes, when Syrinx was the tale;
Eyes which paid dearly for their watchfulness;
Then like a painter who from model paints
I would design the manner of my sleep,
But let whoever can this sleep depict;

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I to my waking moment pass, and tell
  How a great splendour rent my slumber's veil,
  And one cried out—"What doest thou? Arise!"
As to behold the blossoms of the tree
  Which for its apple makes the angels crave,
  And makes perpetual festival in heaven,
Peter and John and James apart were led,
  And fell to earth, but rose again to hear
  That word by which a deeper sleep was broke;
And to perceive their band in number thinned,
  When Moses and Elias passed from sight,
  And in their Master's robe to see the change;
So I shook off my sleep, and saw the saint
  Standing above me who had been my guide
  When late I made my passage o'er the stream.
And all in doubt—"Lo! where is Beatrice?"
  I said; and she in answer—"There beneath
  "The new-born foliage, at the root she sits;
"And see her seven companions close her round:
  "The others with the Gryphon heavenward soar,
  "With a more sweet and more mysterious chant."
If from her lips fell other words than these
  I know it not, for now mine eye was filled
  With her who stayed me from all other thought.
She sate alone on the unsullied earth,
  As if left there the guardian of the car
  I had seen harnessed to the two-fold shape.

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A living coronet around her stood
The seven virgins; in their hands the lights
Which fear no northern blast nor southern gale.
" Within this forest short shall be thy stay,
" With me a life eternal thou shalt live
" In that celestial Rome where dwelleth Christ;
" But for the good of an ill-living world,
" Fix on the car thine eyes, and what they see,
" When thou returnest, let thy pen describe."
As Beatrice thus spake, I at her feet,
Humble and yielding me to her command,
Turned thought and eye thither where she had willed.
Never descended with a swifter flight
Fire from the thunder cloud when falls the bolt
From regions of the sky the most remote,
Than did the bird of Jupiter descend
Above the tree, tearing away the bark,
And not the new leaves only and the flowers.
And lo! it struck the car with its full strength,
So that it staggered like a ship distressed,
Starboard and larboard stricken by the waves.
Then in the hollow of the glorious car
I saw a fox with act impetuous plunge,
Empty and gaunt from lack of proper food;
But chiding it for its defiling sins,
My lady put it to a flight as swift
As its scarce covered bones had power to take;

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Then from the region of its first descent
I saw the eagle swoop into the car,
And with its feathers line it all within ;
And as it were from a grief-burdened heart
Issued a voice from heaven, and thus it spake :—
" Alas, my bark, how evil is thy freight ! "
Then it appeared to me that the earth gaped
Between the wheels, and forth a dragon came,
And with its tail it pierced the chariot through,
And like the wasp as it withdraws its sting,
Drawing towards itself its tail malign
Part of the bottom tore, and mocking fled.
What still remained—as with grass coarse and rank
The fertile soil—with feathers, given perhaps
With a most pure and most benignant act,
Was covered wholly o'er, and covered too
Were both the wheels and pole, in lesser time
Than a sigh rests between the open lips.
The holy edifice transfigured thus
Put forth the form of heads on all its parts,
Three on the pole, and one on every side.
The first were horned like oxen, but the four
Bore on their foreheads each a single horn
Monster so strange as this was never seen !
Fast as a fortress on a lofty rock,
On this a shameless harlot held her seat,
Whose eyes seemed wantonly to roll around.

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And as if none might dare to bear her off,
I saw a giant standing at her side,
And frequent kisses passed between the two.
And as the lustful and the roving eye
Towards me turned, her brutal paramour
Scourged her whole body from the head to foot;
Then of suspicion full and cruel rage,
The monster he unloosed, and through the wood
Dragged it until the wood alone concealed
The harlot's person and the monstrous shape.

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CANTO XXXIII.

Beatrice utters prophecies respecting the Church. She instructs the Poet to write what he now sees. Matilda leads him to the waters of Eunoë. Dante drinks of these, and being now purified and regenerate, he is prepared to ascend to the stars.

Deus, venerunt gentes, in their turn,
Now three, now four, with sweetest melody,
The Virgins, dropping tears, began to chant.
And Beatrice, sighing and pitiful,
Heard them with look so sad, that scarcely more
Was Mary changed by sorrow at the Cross.
But when the others ceasing closed their hymn
That she might speak, rising she upright stood,
And answered, with a cheek which glowed as fire—
"*Modicum, et non videbitis me*
"*Et iterum*—ye Sisters much beloved;
"*Modicum, et vos videbitis me,*"
Then all the seven in front of her she ranged;
And after her, by sign alone, she drew
The Lady, the wise Statius, and myself;

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Then she went forward, and I scarcely think
Her foot had made ten steps upon the ground
When with her lustrous eyes she looked on mine,
And with a gentle aspect, said—" Thy pace
" Quicken thou, so that when I speak to thee
" Thou mayest be rightly placed my words to hear."
Soon as in duty I drew near to her,
She said—" My brother, why not courage take
" To question me, now we are side by side ?"
Like those whom too great awe so overcomes
When in the act of speaking to their lords,
That their voice comes not living from their lips ;
So was my case, for I with broken sound
Began—" Madonna, all my very need
" Thou knowest, and what suiteth it the best."
And then she said to me—" Of fear and shame
" I will thou now disburdenest thyself,
" So that thy speech be not like his who dreams.
" Know that this vessel which the serpent broke
" Was and is not, but he who hath the blame
" Can find no charm to stay the wrath divine.
" The royal bird whose plumage lines the car,
" Making it first a monster then a prey,
" Shall not for ever be devoid of heirs ;
" For I see clearly, and I therefore speak :
" The stars now near which shadow forth a time,
" Secure from obstacle and every bar,

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" In which one marked ' Five hundred ten and five,'
" And sent by God, shall the foul harlot slay,
" And him the giant partner of her crimes.
" And it may be my prophecy obscure,
" Like Themis and the Sphinx, convince thee less
" Because like theirs the intellect it clouds ;
" But soon events thy Laïads will prove
" Who shall the difficult enigma solve,
" Without the cost of flocks and ravaged fields.
" See now that just as from my lips they fall
" These words thou teachest unto living men,
" Men of that life which hurries to the grave.
" And when thou writest bear thou this in mind,
" Not to conceal thy knowledge of the plant
" Which hath been twice beneath the spoiler's hand ;
" Whoever spoileth it, or brings it hurt,
" With act of blasphemy offendeth God,
" Who made it holy for Himself alone.
" For eating this, in suffering and desire
" Hungered the first-born soul five thousand years,
" For him whose body bare the punishment.
" Thy reason sleepeth if it fail to seize
" The mighty motive which hath placed it thus
" High over all, and so in shape reversed.
" And if thy thoughts had not been Elsa's wave
" Vacant within thy breast, and their vain joys
" The Pyramus unto the mulberry ;

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" By such great incidents as these alone
" God's awful justice in His interdict
" By the tree's moral thou hadst surely learnt.
" But since in thine intelligence thou art
" Fashioned of stone, and sullied like the stone,
" So that my words no reflex light awake,
" This is my wish, that these, if not engraved,
" Retain their shadow in thy mind, in sign,
" As the palm wreath upon the pilgrim's staff."
And then I said—" Even as with sealing-wax
" Which changes not the figure stamped thereon,
" So on my brain thy words are now impressed.
" But why so far above my mental sight
" Soareth this word of thine so much desired,
" That all the more I strive the less I see?"
" For this," she said; " that thou may'st know the school
" Of thy philosophy, and see how halts
" Behind my word the doctrine it hath taught;
" And see that from the ways divine thy ways
" Are far apart as the great gulf between
" The earth and that high heaven which swiftest rolls."
I answered her—" I cannot call to mind
" The time when I have ever strayed from thee,
" Nor do I bear the conscience of remorse."
" And if thy memory hath passed away,"
She answered smiling, " still remember thou
" That on this day thou hast of Lethe drank;

" And as the smoke is witness to the fire,
" So this oblivion doth most clearly prove
" The fault which held thy will to other things.
" From this time truly shall my words be plain
" And open, in so far as it shall suit
" The comprehension of thy sluggish mind."
Now more resplendent and with slower course
The sun was travelling his meridian arc,
Which shifteth ever with the observer's place,
When suddenly, as one suspends his step
Who guides a company and leads the way,
If in the path some novelty he finds,
Paused the seven maidens at a shadow's edge,
Like what beneath green leaves and gloomy boughs
The Alp spreads darksome o'er its chilly streams.
The Tigris and Euphrates seemed to rise,
Springing before them from one fountain head,
And as true friends asunder slow to part.
" Oh light, oh glory of the human race !
" What stream is this which rolleth onward here,
" One in its source and double in its flow ? "
So I besought and I was answered—" This
" Pray that Matilda tell ; " and from her lips
Quick as denial when unjust the blame,
The answer came—" Of this and other things
" Hath he been told by me, and sure I am
" That Lethe's water will not these conceal."

Then Beatrice—" Perhaps a greater care,
" Which oftentimes maketh the memory void
" Hath to thy word obscured his mental eye.
" But Eunoë behold which floweth there;
" Lead him to it, and as thy custom is,
" Bring back his sluggish faculty to life."
Like the sweet soul which maketh no excuse
But finds his own will in another's will,
Soon as it is declared by word or sign,
Taking my ready hand within her own,
This Lady beautiful moved on, and said
To Statius graciously—" Come thou with him!"
Reader, if I had now a greater space,
I would, as far as power is given me, sing
Of the sweet draught which never surfeit gives;
But since the pages all are full which mark
The limit set to this my second song,
The rules of art let me no further go.
I turned away from this most holy wave
Renewed and quickened, as the tender plants
Find in young leaves renewal of their life,
Cleansed and prepared to soar unto the stars.

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